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"DAZZLING!...

I COULDN'T BELIEVE THE SIZE OF THE BATHROOM IN MY SUITE!...THE FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS, THE CANOPIED BED, THE PERSIAN CARPETS, ALL THE BRASS AND MARBLE FIXTURES...HARD TO BELIEVE ITS JUST CONSIDERED A ★★★★ HOTEL!"

--ONE OF THE GUYS ON OUR PRESS JUNKET

"INCOMPARABLE!

SIM & GERHARD HAVE SIM-PLY OUTDONE THEMSELVES THIS TIME!...THE SMOKED SALMON WAS TO DIE FOR AND THE PREMIERE YEAR *DOM PERIGNON* MORE THAN MADE UP FOR THE PATHETIC VINTAGE WHITE WINE THEY HAD LAST TIME!"

--ANOTHER ONE OF THE GUYS ON OUR PRESS JUNKET

"I PREFER THE EARLY, FUNNIER ONES..."

--THE GUY ON OUR PRESS JUNKET WHO FOUND OUT THAT THE HARD LIQUOR WASN'T BEING "COMPED"

"...BUT EVEN I HAVE TO ADMIT

CHASING YHWH IV: THE FINAL CHAPTER IS THE FUNNIEST CEREBUS IN YEARS!"

--THAT VERY SAME GUY AFTER HE SAW THE CASE OF 20-YEAR OLD SINGLE MALT WE HAD DELIVERED TO HIS ROOM

CHASING YHWH IV: THE FINAL CHAPTER

James Ricardo

September 10, 2002

Yo Dave,

Hello, hello! I just wanted to let you know that one of your loyal *Cerebus* fans is getting one of his screenplays produced! It's going to be an independent comedy called *Hey DJ*. It's the story of a Miami club DJ who's a loser with the ladies and how he comes out of his shell and ends up romancing three women at once.

It'll be starring indie film maverick Jon Jacobs, Charlotte Lewis (Eddie Murphy's love interest from *The Golden Child*) and Terrence Camilleri (the guy who played Napoleon in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*).

It'll be shot in Miami later this month and will come out in 2003. Be sure and tell all your friends and Cerebus readership about *Hey DJ*. Hopefully the Sim man will find some wisdom and amusement in my celluloid musings about mating and dating when they grace the silver screen next year.

Ciao.
James Ricardo
Southern California

Perhaps more amusement than wisdom? Should be lots of cute chicks in the club scenes, so for that alone, I promise I will go and see Hey DJ. *As for the Cerebus readership, consider yourselves notified. Congratulations, James— and here's to* Hey DJ II, Hey DJ III, Hey DJ The Final Spin *and, uh, so on.*

* * * * * * *

Belated thanks to Timmy G. of Chicago, Illinois from whom I swiped the "...banged her like a screen door in a hurricane" line in Cerebus 283.

CEREBUS
NO. 285 DECEMBER 2002

DAVE SIM
Creator, Writer
Characters/
pencil & ink,
mechanical tones,
lettering

GERHARD
Background
Artist/pencil & ink

CHRIS VERHOEVEN
Cover Technician

KEN SIM
Cover Photo

LATTER DAYS
•
PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 266
and 267)
•
BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 268 to
288)
•
BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 289 to
300)

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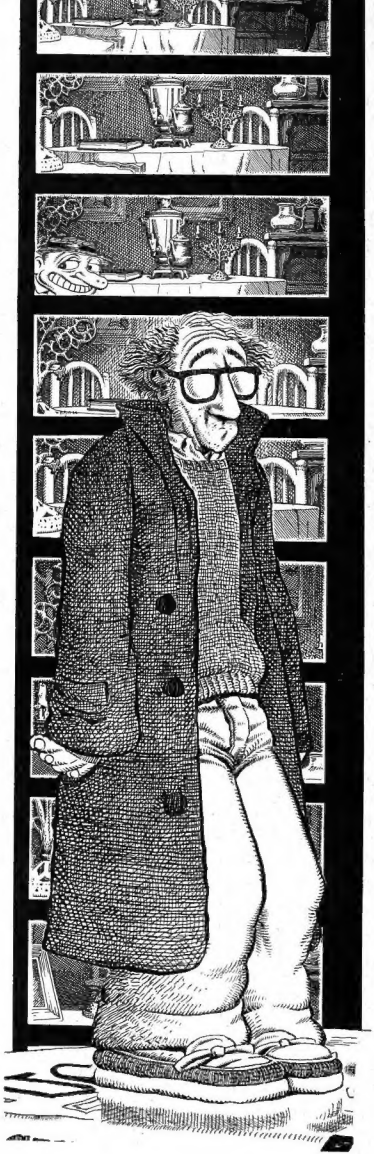


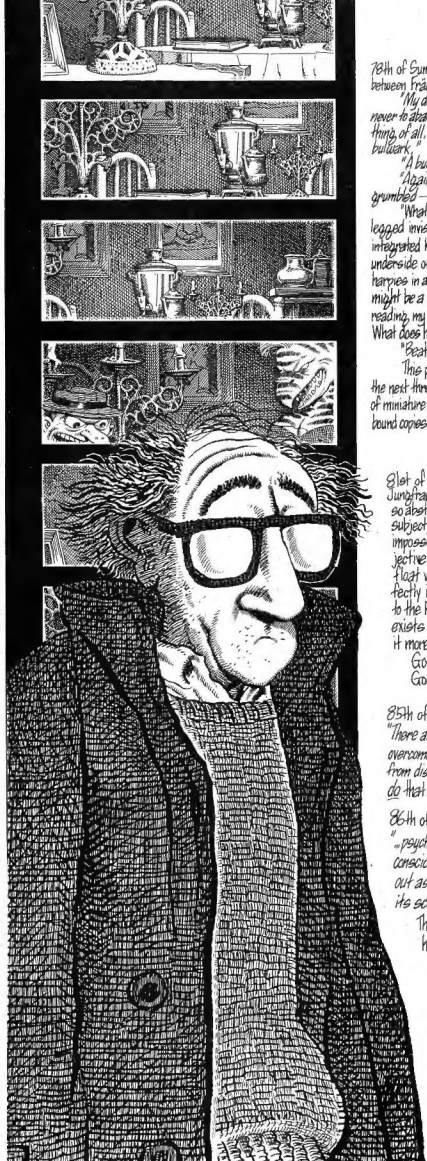
31st of Summermonth - *invisibilem solem pluribus incognitum* ("an invisible sun unknown to many") *Vos estis lux mundi* ("you are the lights of the world") *lumen naturae* ("the lights of nature — sparks scintillating in the blackness of the arcane substance") *anima mundi* ("world soul") *Septem isti oculi sunt Domini, qui discurrunt in universam terram* ("these are the seven eyes of the Lord that run to-and-fro through the whole earth")

Where do I know this from?

60th of Summermonth 79 – "I was walking along a little road through a hilly landscape...then I came to a small wayside chapel. The door was ajar and I went in...in front of the altar, facing me sat a yogi — in lotus posture in deep meditation. When I looked at him more closely I realized that he had my face. I stared in profound surprise and awoke with the thought, 'Aha! So he is the one who is meditating, me. He has a dream and I am in it.' The moment Jungfrau realized this I awoke and realized that both Jungfrau *and* the yogi had had *my* face. Does this make me smarter than the average Yogi? Or have I just made a Boo-Boo?"

64th of Summermonth 79 – "Between collective consciousness and the collective unconscious there is an almost unbridgeable gulf over which the subject finds himself suspended." I weep tears of unmitigated joy! For the first time in my life I know where I belong, hanging, in mid-air over the gulf which exists between collective consciousness and the collective unconscious! A reverie as...real as today's headlines overtakes me! In my personal unconscious I see myself, my Self! Suffused with inner radiance! "Running on air"! Home at last! In the next instant my face appears to drain of emotion, the piston-like movements of my legs slow and then stop. Swallowing hard, slowly, I reach down and, with splayed fingertips, begin to seek — cautiously, carefully — for some manner of *rimes* (terms or otherwise). To the synchronistic sound of two high notes played on a grand piano, I see myself blink twice and then suddenly, in the next instant, I see myself plummet, plunging down, down, down into the almost unbridgeable gulf between the collective consciousness and the collective unconscious growing smaller and smaller even as the faint and inexplicable whistling sound accompanying my descent fades from my hearing, and my falling form shrinks and vanishes from view. A second or two later there comes the distant, muffled but sickeningly distinct sound of impact and a tiny concentric ring of dust rises lazily from the nearly unimaginable depths. Immediately, I realize that this is all Sigmund Freud's fault. Damn him!

70th of Summermonth 79 – Just as Jungfrau had predicted, the sudden influx of images and impressions from the collective and personal unconscious into my conscious mind has effectively deposed my conscious Konigsberg, Ego (who, having been denied a bail hearing, is presently awaiting trial in some substrata of my newly emergent and more fully integrated Konigsberg Self). So far, his request for a court-appointed attorney has been rejected by representatives from Hobgoblins Without Borders, Chimeras for the Collective Unconscious Way, The Elvin Civil Liberties Union *and* Mad Pixies Against Drunken Mothers (so to say the least, things aren't looking too good for him at the moment).



78th of Summermonth 79 - So that was the way the relationship between Fraud and Jungfrau had ended!

"My dear Jungfrau," the master admonished, "Promise me never to abandon the sexual theory. That is the most essential thing, of all. You see, we must make a dogma of it, an unshakable bulwark."

"A bulwark - against what?" Jungfrau demanded.

"Against the black tide of mud," - here Fraud paused, then grumbled - "of occultism."

"What does he mean by *that*?" snarls Mr. Synod, the three-legged invisible dwarf who (my newly emergent and more fully integrated Konigsberg Self informs me) has been living on the underside of my overcoat collar with a family of miniature striped harpies in a parallel dimension (which might be a colour or which might be a letter of the alphabet) and has (evidently) been reading my copy of *Dream Warriors* over my shoulder. "Yeah! What does he mean by *that*?" echoes one of the harpies.

"Beats me."

This proves to be an unfortunate choice of rejoinder as I spend the next three nights strapped to a harpsichord, running a gauntlet of miniature striped Mr. Synods all playing me with studded leather-bound copies of Fraud's *Achtung! Das Hanky-Panky Ist Uberlegenheit!*

81st of Summermonth 79 - What I most admire about Jungfrau's views on thinking, is that they are so abstruse, so abstracted and so completely tangential to their subject that they make the actual process of thought impossible, thus allowing, one's purely Emotive, Subjective and Wholly Internalized Self to, in essence, float within the amniotic sac of Jungfrau's perfectly impenetrable Jargon, completely impervious to the Rational, Objective and Socialized world which exists outside of Jungfrau's theorizing. Or, to put it more succinctly:

Goo.

Goo goo goo goo goo Goo.

85th of Summermonth 79 - Jungfrau writes: "*There are many stumbling blocks that cannot be overcome by reason. We shall therefore refrain from discussing them.*" I didn't know you could *do* that! This is *my* kind of science!

86th of Summermonth 79 - Jungfrau also writes that "*...psychology actualizes the unconscious urge to consciousness. Psychology is doomed to cancel itself out as a science and therein precisely it reaches its scientific goal.*"

The more closely I examine this observation (as has been the case with so much of Jungfrau's writings) the more I realize that it evinces such depths of meaning, that - in a manner resonant with the observation - it cancels itself out thereby achieving, simultaneously a state both of profound meaning *and* profound meaninglessness, even as it disappears up its own pedantic unlikelihood. Again, this is *my* kind of science.

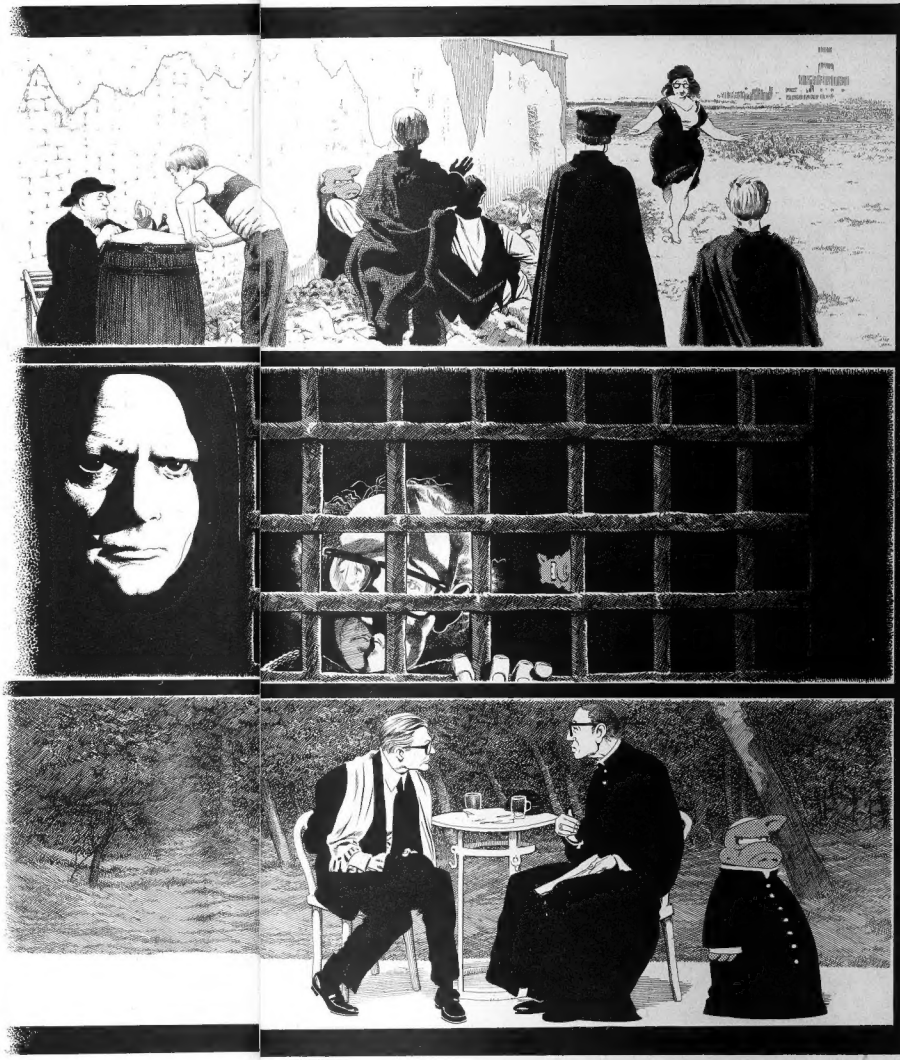
1st of Steve 79 – Jungfrau has also written "The nocturnal mind has no need to bury its insights under symbolic camouflage in order to slip them past the watchful eye of the super-ego. There is no reason under the sun why we should assume that the dream is a crafty device to lead us astray." In two simple sentences the master has completely refuted the entirety of Freud's Dream Theories by the most direct method possible: by stating that he doesn't believe them to be true! I reiterate: this is my kind of science! What a relief to know that Mr Synod and the miniature striped harpies aren't symbolic of anything, but have their own reality which is grounded both in my personal and in the collective unconscious (thus!) having, not just one meaning, but rather many meanings all of which are perfectly valid and real because I have consciously thought of them. As an example, just this morning I thought, "I think I'm going seriously insane here." Which upset me only until I realized what an infinite variety of completely valid realities are represented within the term "going," within the term "seriously," within the term "insane" and within the term "here" – and in my conscious mind alone! Multiply each of those realities by the colour mauve, the letter "p" and the mustard stain on the bottom of this page (even allowing for the fact that the downstroke on the "p" and much of the shade of red which composes the "reddish" part of mauve cancel each other out) and (as any fool can plainly see) what results is a comprehensive collective unconscious vista of all realities represented by the term "going$^{[p]}$" by the term "seriously$^{[mauve]}$" by the term "insane$^{[mustard]}$" and by the term "here" (where mustard and mauve are the co-tangents). Which, in turn (because I have conceived of all those realities in my conscious mind) are themselves dwarfed by the still larger number of realities in the collective unconscious which, in turn (because I have conceived of all those realities in my conscious mind) are themselves dwarfed by the still larger number of ... etc$^{[p]}$ etc$^{[mauve]}$ etc$^{[mustard]}$.

3rd of Steve 79 – The brilliance of Jungfrau! Who else could have written: "Why is there this frightful conflict between good and evil? So the unconscious can reply, 'look closer! Each needs the other. The best, just because it is the best, holds the seed of evil, and there is nothing so bad but good can come of it.'" This is why Jungfrau's theories are so effective; because he always takes the Larger View, encouraging his patients to see that their goal is not to become "well" or "cured" but rather to recognize and embrace "sickness" as a vital component of their (his or her) own Larger Holistic Self. To recognize that there is no health possible without sickness just as there is no sickness possible without health.

3rd of Steve 80 – Hard to believe that another year has gone by – or that my experiments in "lucid dreaming" (attempting to achieve full consciousness within the dream state) have taken so long to reach fruition. On the one hand, considering that I've only managed to achieve the reverse (that is, I'm now living in a permanent dream state during my waking hours) "fruition" might be a bit of an overstatement. On the other hand, relative to the Larger View, I'm calling this one a clear-cut "win-win" situation (leaving aside how unpleasant it is to pass Mr Synod through my right nostril every minute or so). Someone (who may be the letter "m" or the illegitimate daughter of the colour puce) has just informed me that Cerebus is ready to resume dictating his commentaries. Switching to understatement: this should be interesting.

Cerebus:

[watching Konigsberg who has his pants hiked up above his knees and who is dancing back and forth for an invisible audience] Hard to believe another year has gone by. [watches Konigsberg for a few seconds shimmying and shaking in one spot] Anyway. [reading the Torah] We left off with Jacob's sons being born. His first wife, Leah, has four: one right after the other. The *first* one she calls Reuben, which translates as "See a son". See, there are *two* levels of meaning here. The *first* level of meaning is the *meaning* of the names. With the *meaning* of the names God is [sighs] *again* trying to explain things to Yoohwhoo. So, with Reuben—"See a son"—God is explaining to Yoohwhoo that God *sees* her. This is God's answer to the "who is whose son?" game. Even though God *knows* that Yoohwhoo is definitely *not* His son and even though God knows that God is definitely not *Yoohwhoo's* son, God is willing to explain things *in those terms* because God knows that that's the *only* way that he can get Yoohwhoo to listen. What God is saying to Yoohwhoo is: whether Yoohwhoo *is* or *isn't* God's son or whether God is or isn't Yoohwhoo's son—*it is a fact* that *God sees Yoohwhoo*. Yoohwhoo doesn't see *God* because God is a *Spirit*, and therefore *invisible*. But Yoohwhoo is the living thing in the middle of the earth, a big fire and a big light. God *sees* her. God can't *miss* seeing her. God just has to look at the big fire and the big light in the middle of the earth, and God says, "Yup. That's Yoohwhoo." So, "See a son". That's the *first* level of meaning. The *second* level of meaning—in each case—is what Leah says are *her reasons* for giving each son the name that she does. So when Reuben is born, she says, *"Surely the Yoohwhoo hath looked vpon my affliction. Now therefore will my husband loue me."* Leah wants Jacob to *love* her, which Jacob *doesn't*. And Yoohwhoo *knows* that. A *blind* man from *a hundred miles away* would know that Leah wants Jacob to love her and a blind man *from a hundred miles away* would know that Jacob *doesn't* love Leah. What God is trying to show Yoohwhoo is that Yoohwhoo's *love for God* is as futile as Leah's *love for Jacob*. God is willing to *explain* things to Yoohwhoo. God is *trying*—and *has been trying*—for a few thousand *years* to explain things to Yoohwhoo. However! If all Yoohwhoo cares about is that she wants God to love her and she wants to become *one flesh* with God and to have God's *babies*, then she *isn't* going to understand because, as God assured her way, way back when the dove flew away from Noah for the last time—*"which returned not againe vnto him any more"—Yoohwhoo and God do not become one flesh. They never* did *and they never* will. Even if Yoohwhoo could make Leah pregnant—which she can't—and even if having a son would make Jacob happy—which it does—It. Is. *NOT.* Going. To. Make. Jacob. Love. Leah. God is trying to use *that* situation between Jacob and Leah that Yoohwhoo *understands: that Jacob is never…under* any *circumstances…going to love Leah*—to explain to Yoohwhoo the situation between God and Yoohwhoo that Yoohwhoo *refuses* to understand: that there is nothing Yoohwhoo could do and there is nothing Yoohwhoo could say…*ever*…under *any* circumstances…which is going to make God change His mind and become one flesh with Yoohwhoo. So the *next* son is born, and *this* one Leah calls Simeon, which translates as "Hearing." So, now you have "See a son" and "Hearing". God *sees* Yoohwhoo. God also *hears* Yoohwhoo. And, really, God is just pointing out the obvious: Yoohwhoo *knows* that God sees her and God hears her because *every stupid idea that Yoohwhoo comes up with comes true!* If God *didn't* see her and *didn't* hear her, how could he make everything she thinks of come true? And then you have the *second* level of meaning when Leah says, *"Because the Yoohwhoo hath heard that I was hated, hee hath therefore giuen mee this also."* [we both pause for a few minutes to watch Konigsberg who has pulled himself up to the lattice-work at the rear of the last row of pews and appears to be trying to whisper to someone he imagines he sees on the other side] Typical female reaction, one extreme to the other. If you don't *love* her, then right away she decides that you *hate* her. God is trying to point out a few things here. One? Yoohwhoo hears Leah. Two? Yoohwhoo *hears* that Leah *believes* that Jacob hates her. Three? The fact that Yoohwhoo *hears* what *Leah* believes *doesn't* mean that *Yoohwhoo believes* what *Leah* believes: that Jacob hates Leah. Yoohwhoo *knows* that Jacob doesn't and will never *love* Leah. But Yoohwhoo also *knows* that that *doesn't* mean that Jacob *hates* Leah. Four? Yoohwhoo knows that the fact that Jacob *doesn't love Leah* has *nothing to do with the fact* that Leah has given birth to Jacob's first two sons. Yoohwhoo, *at no point in time*, said to herself, "Oh, poor Leah, I'll give her Reuben, or I'll get God to give her Reuben, because of her affliction, that her husband doesn't love her." Yoohwhoo *knows* that Jacob *doesn't* love Leah and *Yoohwhoo could not care less* whether Jacob loves Leah. And Yoohwhoo *could not care less* whether Leah has a baby. And Yoohwhoo, *at no point in time*, said to herself, "Oh, poor Leah, I'll give her Simeon or I'll get God to give her Simeon because her husband hates her." What God is saying is that Leah *completely misunderstands* Yoohwhoo the same way that Yoohwhoo *completely misunderstands* God. So, okay. Having established *that*, God goes back to the basic facts. One, God *sees* Yoohwhoo. Two, God *hears* Yoohwhoo. Three, God has no intention of becoming one flesh with Yoohwhoo. Four, the fact that God *sees* Yoohwhoo and the fact that God *hears* Yoohwhoo is *not* a *consolation prize* that God has *awarded to* Yoohwhoo because God *feels sorry* for Yoohwhoo or because God *feels guilty* that He has no intention of becoming one flesh with Yoohwhoo—any more than Yoohwhoo *sees* Leah or Yoohwhoo *hears* Leah because Yoohwhoo *feels guilty* about Jacob *not loving* Leah. Yoohwhoo *sees* Leah because Leah exists. "Yup. That's Leah." Yoohwhoo *hears* Leah because Leah exists. "Yup. That's Leah." *Does* God hate Yoohwhoo? [thinks] [we're interrupted for a few minutes by Konigsberg who has pulled a chair up behind Cerebus and proceeds to discuss his therapy with someone he alternately calls "Marcello" and "Guido"] Let's put it this way. The fact that Yoohwhoo kicked men out of her garden so they couldn't eat of the fruit of the tree of life and the fact that Yoohwhoo then sat and watched Adam, God's man that he made specially for her garden—for *nine centuries*—growing old and dying because Yoohwhoo thinks that men are evil and deserve to die and the fact that Yoohwhoo keeps trying to figure out how to *be* God instead of *obeying* God…well…let's say that it's probably a safe bet that none of these things has exactly *endeared* Yoohwhoo to God or made God feel all warm and fuzzy when He thinks of Yoohwhoo. Speaking personally? Cerebus thinks Yoohwhoo is the worst sort of obnoxious, no-account, low-down, dirty, hose-bag bitch that…that…[takes him a few seconds to calm down]



[laughs] Like Cerebus said, God is *much nicer* than Cerebus. Anyway. In no uncertain terms, for the umpteenth time, God is telling Yoohwhoo that Yoohwhoo *does not now* nor does Yoohwhoo *ever become* one flesh with God. But! God can…and *does… see* Yoohwhoo and God can…and *does…hear* Yoohwhoo. God is always there, *watching* Yoohwhoo and *listening* to Yoohwhoo. [thinks] Which doesn't mean Yoohwhoo is anyone special, by the way. God watches and listens to *everyone*. So, okay. The third son is born, Levi, which translates as "Joined". Which leads Leah to say, *"Now this time will my husband be joyned vnto me because I haue borne him three sonnes."* God is obviously hoping that Yoohwhoo—by seeing and hearing *Leah* being as stupid as *Yoohwhoo* has been—that Yoohwhoo will recognize how stupid she, Yoohwhoo, has been and how stupid she, Yoohwhoo, is being. Yoohwhoo *can plainly see* that Jacob doesn't love Leah. Yoohwhoo *can plainly see* that giving birth to Reuben *didn't make Jacob love Leah*, giving birth to Simeon *didn't make Jacob love Leah* and giving birth to Levi *is NOT going to make Jacob love Leah*. "See a son," "Hearing". What God is saying is that—insofar as God *sees* Yoohwhoo and God *hears* Yoohwhoo—God and Yoohwhoo are "joined". But—like it or lump it, Yoohwhoo—that is as "joined" as God and Yoohwhoo are *ever* going to get. [we're both distracted momentarily by Konigsberg who, having opened his shirt wide across his shoulders is lolling his head and making little moaning noises] [Cerebus clears his throat loudly and, mercifully, Konigsberg shuts up] And, with that, we reach the conclusion of the first three sons of Jacob who, being three, of course, represent Yoohwhoo, the younger being, "She, He and It," Reuben, Simeon and Levi, "See a son," "Hearing" and "Joined," come *first* because Jacob, Isaac's *younger* son, has supplanted the birthright and the blessing of the *elder* son, Esau—in the same way that Yoohwhoo has supplanted God. And then the *fourth* son is born, Judah, which means "Praise". As Leah says, *"Now wil I praise the Yoohwhoo."* God, the elder being, comes fourth after "She, He and It". Having cast *Leah* as Yoohwhoo, and *Yoohwhoo* as God, God is suggesting that—having established that God *sees* Yoohwhoo and that God *hears* Yoohwhoo—it might be a good idea for Yoohwhoo to *praise* God, just as Leah *praises* Yoohwhoo. You know, because God is the One who is spending thousands of years trying to explain things to Yoohwhoo? And God is the One who makes everything happen that Yoohwhoo thinks of? [thinks] God is no doubt aware that there isn't even the remotest chance of this happening with an obnoxious, low-down, no-account, dirty, hose-bag bitch of a….a…[sighs]…But, God probably figured it was worth a shot. And Leah—having popped four sons out of her oven just like that—*"stood from bearing."* Okay. Chapter thirty. *"And when Rachel saw that shee bare Iacob no children, Rachel enuied her sister, and said vnto Iacob, Giue me children or els I die. And Iacobs anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, Am I in Gods stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the wombe?"* So, Jacob proves that at least *someone* has his head on straight and knows that it's *God* who decides who does and who doesn't get pregnant.

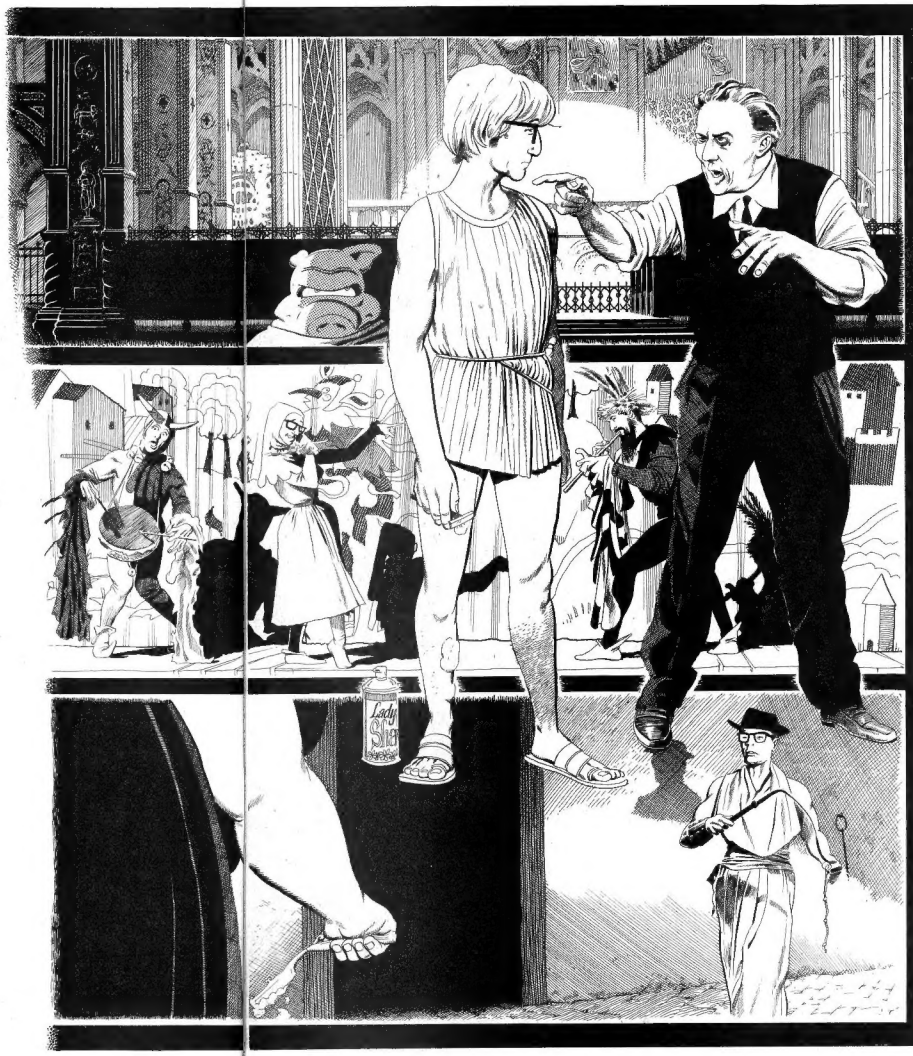
Konigsberg:
Marcello.

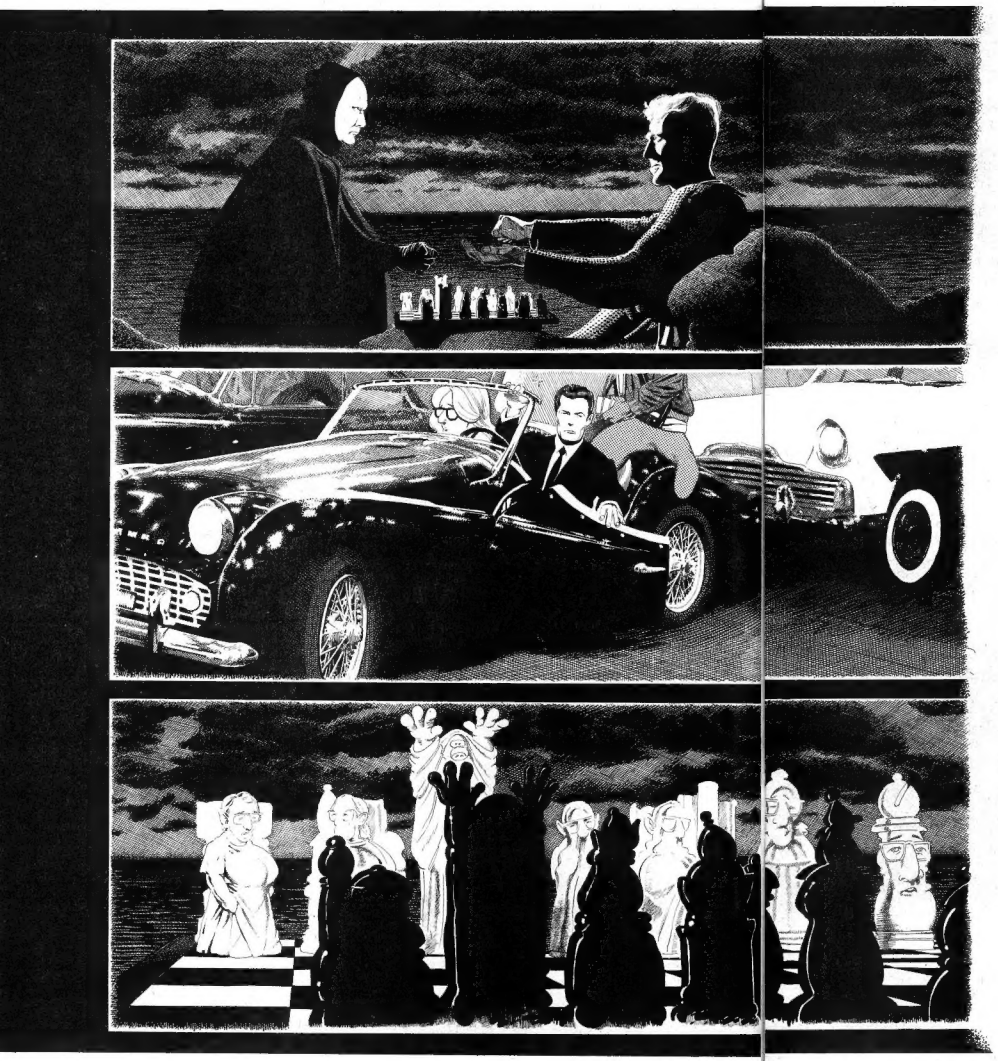
[Cerebus and I look away as quickly as we can] *"And she said, Behold my mayde Bilhah: goe in vnto her, and she shall beare vpon my knees, that I may also be built by her."* Okay, so here we have the Sarai/Hagar trick all over again, a little reminder that the Big Yoohwhoo in Egypt is still up ahead in the story, getting ready to take Abraham's seed down into a "land that is not theirs." *"And she gaue him Bilhah her handmayd to wife: and Iacob went in vnto her. And Bilhah conceiued and bare Iacob a sonne. And Rachel said, God hath iudged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath giuen me a sonne; therefore called she his name Dan."* "Dan" means "Judging". Okay, so now Rachel is doing the same thing as Leah—providing a *second* level of meaning by *her interpretation* of the name that she chooses. God has established what *Yoohwhoo's* reality is with Leah's *first four* sons. Now, God moves over closer to what is *actually* going on. God *heard* Rachel—that she wanted children—and God *judged* Rachel—whether she *deserved* children—and God *decided*, "Okay, Rachel can have a son through her maid." It really doesn't matter whether Rachel gets pregnant or her maid gets pregnant, its Jacob's seed. If Rachel *wants* to believe that the fact that she *owns* Bilhah because her father gave her Bilhah as a *wedding present* means that any baby *Bilhah* has is actually *Rachel's*—well, it's a little *nutty*, but, hey, why not? It's not important. It's a side issue. God is frying much bigger fish, here. What God is saying is that God *hears* and God *judges*. God *hears* Rachel and God *judges* Rachel. God hears *everyone* and God *judges* everyone. So, Bilhah's elder son establishes what the elder being, God, is all about after all of Yoohwhoo's misunderstanding of who God is, who Yoohwhoo is and what it is that they do. God *sees* Yoohwhoo, God *hears* Yoohwhoo and God *judges* Yoohwhoo. Because that's God's *job*. That is who God *is*. Okay. *"And Rachel saide, With wrastlings of God haue I wrastled with my sister, and I haue prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali."* Which translates as "My Wrestling". This, in a nutshell, is what God is judging. Yoohwhoo is wrestling with everything from the bad fruit that she ate, to the men, to God, to who she thinks she is, to who she thinks God is. She's wrestling with all of that for thousands and thousands of years. God *sees* her wrestling with all that, God *hears* her wrestling with all that, and, on an on-going basis, minute by minute, day by day, for thousands and thousands of years, God *judges* how Yoohwhoo is doing with everything that she's wrestling with. So far? [thinks] Well, see, God is *getting* to that. But before God gets to "how Yoohwhoo is doing so far," God is again trying to explain that everything is very, very, very, *very* simple. [as if he is talking to a two-year-old] As simple as "Dan"—judging—and "Naphtali"—wrestling. There is an elder being, God, a younger being, Yoohwhoo, and the job of God is to *judge* how Yoohwhoo is doing with the things she's *wrestling* with. Okay. *"When Leah saw that she had left bearing, shee tooke Zilpah her mayde, and gaue her Iacob to wife. And Zilpah Leahs mayde bare Iacob a sonne. And Leah said, A troupe commeth: and she called his name Gad."* Which translates as "a troop" or "a company". What God is pointing out is that even given the very basic, very simple nature of reality—that, beginning, middle and end, it is God's *job* to judge *how* Yoohwhoo is *doing*—Yoohwhoo can *never*, it seems, *just leave it at that*. Yoohwhoo has

to "multiply her conceptions," and come up with every crackpot idea that she can as to whether she is God's Half-Sister-God or God is her Uncle-God or she is God's Niece-God. And, further, God, through the birth of Gad, is indicating that God *knows* that. What God is saying is that, judging Yoohwhoo so far, anytime *God tries to explain* to Yoohwhoo what is going on—something as simple as "God is *judging* and Yoohwhoo is *wrestling*"—right away, "Behold a troop commeth!" You know. Tell Yoohwhoo the truth [laughs] and here come ten more crackpot loony-tune ideas that God has to make come true and then deal with. *"And Zilpah Leahs mayde bare Iacob a second sonne. And Leah said, In my happiness, for the daughters will call be blessed: and she called his name Asher."* "Asher" translates as "Happy". So, the two sons that *Bilhah* bore for Jacob represent God's best and simplest explanation of what is going on between God and Yoohwhoo. God is judging and Yoohwhoo is wrestling. And the two sons that *Zilpah* bore for Jacob represent God's best *judgment* of Yoohwhoo's *wrestling*: Yoohwhoo keeps coming up with all these "troops" of crackpot, loony-tune ideas because [laughs] *it makes her happy.* If coming up with a bunch of crackpot loony-tune ideas make you happy [laughs] let's just say that *only* daughters—women—would call you "blessed" for living that way. *"And Reuben went in the dayes of wheat haruest, & found Mandrakes in the field, and brought them vnto his mother Leah. Then Rachel saide to Leah, Giue me, I pray thee, of thy sonnes Mandrakes. And shee said vnto her, Is it a small matter, that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldst thou take away my sonnes Mandrakes also? and Rachel said, Therefore hee shall lye with thee to night, for thy sonnes Mandrakes. And Iacob came out of the field in the euening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in vnto mee: for surely I haue hired thee with my sonnes Mandrakes. And hee lay with her that night."* [laughs and laughs and laughs] Jacob is such a putz. He worked *fourteen years* to get Rachel [laughs and laughs and laughs] and she hires him out to her sister for a bunch of flowers that her sister's son picked! And he just goes along with it! Talk about the women being in charge—just like back in the garden! [laughs and laughs and laughs] [finally stops laughing and goes quiet for a long while] Of course, it's also about the relationship between God and Yoohwhoo. By coming up with "Gad" and "Asher," God has sized up Yoohwhoo pretty good and even Yoohwhoo has to admit that to herself—way down there in the middle of the earth. God's right and she knows it. Nothing makes Yoohwhoo happier than coming up with another bunch of screwy ideas. But *that* [laughs]-that raised a question that Yoohwhoo never considered before. Because God sees, hears and judges Yoohwhoo and is willing to spend thousands and thousands of years trying to get her to understand what's going on, dealing, one at a time, with every crackpot idea she comes up with, letting her usurp his position and making everything she comes up with come true—well, the question that's *got* to occur to Yoohwhoo—who, let's face it, wouldn't lift a finger to help *anybody* for a *minute*, let alone for *thousands of years*—the question that's got to occur to Yoohwhoo and, Cerebus is willing to bet, did occur to Yoohwhoo after "Gad" and "Asher" is: So what's God's "angle"? You know, what does *God* get out of all this? What makes God happy, the same way that coming up with a bunch of screwy ideas makes Yoohwhoo happy? And the answer is, Yoohwhoo's flowers. You know, flowers are *nothing* compared to what *God* can create. They can't get up or walk around or fly or talk or think. They aren't, you know, much good for anything. They're not even as useful as Yoohwhoo's *wheat* that was being harvested at the same time. Wheat you can make *bread* or *cakes* out of and, you know, *eat* them. But, for God, it's not the flowers themselves so much as the fact that they're *Yoohwhoo's* flowers. They are something Yoohwhoo created *on her own, with no help from God.* A creation created by one of God's creations—one of God's creations who [laughs] bless her dopey little heart thinks she's His son, just like Reuben is Jacob's son. His first-born. And *that,* Cerebus is pretty sure, *that* makes them more important and more valuable to God than just about darned near anything. They're *beautiful*—just the way Yoohwhoo *intended* them to be, just the way that Yoohwhoo *made* them. *That* was why Reuben wanted to pick them and give them to his mother, and *that* was why Leah was happy to get them, and *that* was why Rachel wanted them when she saw them. And *that's* why God likes them—for the same reason Reuben and Leah and Rachel liked them. They're *beautiful*! And *that's* why Yoohwhoo's flowers are all the payment that God could ever want or ask for—from the living thing inside the earth who thinks she's his son—in exchange for God's thousands and thousands of years of patient seeing…and hearing…and explaining…and judging. That's God's "hire". *"And Leah said, God hath giuen mee my hire, because I haue giuen my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar."* Issachar translates as "a Hire".

[we both notice at the same time that Konigsberg has taken his pants off and is miming shaving his legs, occasionally standing up and saying, "Yes, sir, Mr. Fellini" or "No, sir, Mr. Fellini"]

So, uh [watches Konigsberg for another minute or so: "Yes, sir, Mr. Fellini" "No, sir, Mr. Fellini"] So, okay. *"And Leah conceiued againe, and bare Iacob the sixth sonne. And Leah said, God hath endued me a good dowry: Now will my husband dwel with me, because I haue borne him sixe sonnes. And shee called his name Zebulun."* Zebulun translates as "Dwelling". Which is, you know [laughs] "So, here we are." Yoohwhoo dwelling in the middle of the earth and God watching her and listening to her and getting ready to judge whatever she does or says. And Yoohwhoo basically [laughs] mulling things over. Finally, she's mulling things over for so long that Leah gets pregnant and gives birth again. *" And afterwards shee bare a daughter and called her name Dinah."* Dinah translates as "Judgment". So, God is basically acknowledging that Yoohwhoo didn't just come up with another troop full of crazy ideas to make herself happy. She actually thought about things and for a long time. Long enough that, for the first time, as a result, Leah had a *daughter* instead of a son. Because *Yoohwhoo* was doing something good for a change, acting the way God wanted her to act—exercising *Judgment*—instead of just being a troublemaker. Also, the children Leah bore to Jacob represent the *days* in the first two chapters of the first Book of Moshe: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulon representing the *six* days that God said it took him to create the heaven and the earth and Dinah representing the *one* day that Yoohwhoo said it took her to create the heavens and the earth. [laughs] So, while Yoohwhoo is mulling all of that over: *"And God remembred Rachel, and God hearkened to her,*





and opened her wombe. And she conceiued and bare a sonne, and said, God hath taken away my reproach: and she called his name Ioseph, and saide, the Yoohwhoo shall adde to me another sonne." Joseph translates as "Adding". So, God takes away His reproach from Rachel, the way He has taken away His reproach from Yoohwhoo—and which God will continue to take away as long as Yoohwhoo continues to exercise Judgment. And Judgment, in this case, is going to center on whether Yoohwhoo wants God to allow Rachel to get pregnant again or not, because Rachel has said that *"Yoohwhoo shall adde to me another sonne."* See, it's a test of Yoohwhoo's Judgment—a test of whether she has learned her lesson that she is not supposed to lie and say that she makes women pregnant, because she knows that *only God* decides if women get pregnant or not. God will make Rachel pregnant with another son *if that's what Yoohwhoo wants*, but, knowing that Rachel will see that as confirmation that "the Yoohwhoo" is able to make women pregnant telling God that Yoohwhoo wants Rachel to get pregnant will be a giant step backward from the Judgment that Yoohwhoo is finally starting to learn. A giant step all the way back to the "women's seed" crap and Hawwa saying that "she has gotten a man from the Yoohwhoo." It's a test of whether Yoohwhoo is going to go back to using *Bad* Judgment or whether Yoohwhoo is going to continue using *Good* Judgment. [laughs] And while Yoohwhoo mulls *that* one over, it's time to check in again with Jacob, the Putz. Who is, surprise, surprise, finally acting a little less like a putz. *"And it came to passe when Rachel had borne Ioseph, that Iacob said vnto Laban, Send me away, that I may goe vnto mine owne place, and to my countrey. Giue my wiues and my children, for whom I haue serued thee, and let me goe: for thou knowest my seruice which I haue done thee."* See what Cerebus means? He actually sounds as if he has a pair of balls for a change. *"And Laban said vnto him, I pray thee, if I haue found fauour in thine eyes: for I haue learned by experience, that the Yoohwhoo hath blessed me for thy sake. And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will giue it. And hee said vnto him, Thou knowest how I haue serued thee, and how thy cattell with me. For it was little which thou hadst before I: and it is broken foorth vnto a multitude; and the Yoohwhoo hath blessed thee at my foote."* Whoa!

Good one, Jacob. "At my foot". Unfortunately, Jacob then goes a little "putz-y"—probably because he isn't used to talking about anyone being "at his foot" and he doesn't want Laban, you know, getting *mad* at him. [laughs] Putz. *"...and now when shall I prouide for mine owne house also? And he said, What shall I giue thee?"* And then Jacob's balls suddenly grow back. *"and Iacob said, Thou shalt not giue me any thing:"* and then Jacob turns back into a putz: *"if thou wilt doe this thing for mee, I will againe feed keepe thy flocke."* Now the next part is *really* interesting. [We're both startled to hear a loud THUMP from Konigsberg's direction. Just as we look over, standing stiff and straight, he *jumps* into the air, landing THUMP! about a foot to his right. And then he *jumps* into the air again, landing THUMP! another foot or so to his right. We both just stare at him for a few seconds]

Me:
He must think that he's a Knight.

Cerebus:
That must be it. If he thought he was a Bishop, he'd be moving diagonally.
Where was Cerebus? Oh, aye.
"I wil passe through all thy flocke to day, remoouing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattell: and all the browne cattell among the sheepe, and the spotted and speckled among the goates, and shalbe my hire. So shall my righteousnesse answer for mee to morrow, when it shall come for my hire, before thy face: euery one that is not speckled and spotted amongst the goates, and browne amongst the sheepe, that shalbe counted stolen with me. And Laban saide, Beholde, I would it might bee according to thy word. And he remoued that day the hee goates that were ring-straked, and spotted, and all the shee goats that were speckled and spotted, euery one that had white in it, and all the browne amongst the sheepe, and gaue into the hand of his sonnes. And hee set three dayes iourney betwixt himselfe and Iacob: and Iacob fed the rest of Labans flocks. And Iacob tooke him rods of greene poplar, and of the hasel and chestnut tree, and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appeare which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had pilled, before the flockes in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drinke, that they should conceiue when they came to drinke. And the flockes conceiued before the rods, and brought forth cattell ring-straked, speckled and spotted. And Iacob did separate the lambes, and set the faces of the flockes toward the ring-straked, and all the browne in the flocke of Laban: and he put his owne flocks by themselues, and put them not vnto Labans cattell. And it came to passe whensoeuer the stronger cattell did conceiue, that Iacob layd the rods before the eyes of the cattell in the gutters, that they might conceiue among the rods. But when the cattel were feeble, hee put not in: so the feebler were Labans, and the stronger Iacobs. And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattell, and mayd-seruants, and men seruants, and camels, and asses." [Cerebus breaks into gales and gales of laughter, laughing and laughing until tears are coming out of his eyes. It's a little while before he notices that I'm not. Laughing, that is.]

Cerebus:
Don't you *get it?*

Me:
[irritated] I guess not.

Cerebus:
[whatever it is, it's so funny, he doesn't even notice that I'm irritated, he just starts laughing again] *This* is what Yoohwhoo was mulling over for a long time. See, she *liked* the fact that God considers her flowers to be His "hire," His "wages". She liked that part a lot. So then she

started to think about *other* things that her *other* plants could do. So, when she heard Jacob and Laban talking about what Jacob's wages should be [laughs] Yoohwhoo got another one of her bright ideas. [laughs] One of her "knowledge of good and evil" ideas and basically told Jacob about "pilling strakes in rods of green poplar and hasel and the chestnut tree" and how, if you put them in the cattle troughs while the cattle are feeding, the cattle bring forth ring-straked and spotted offspring [by now I'm laughing along] [he tries to be serious] God must've been just shaking His head. [bursts out laughing again] But, how can you *not* laugh? Just picturing Yoohwhoo wrestling with this, this *"Judgment" thing*—thinking and thinking about how she can do, you know, *Good* Judgment things like God *wants her* to. [by this point I can barely breathe, I'm laughing so hard. I give up trying to write it down. I'll write it down when we're both done laughing] and what does she come up with? *Black magic! That Jacob can use to cheat Laban out of his cattle!* [we laughed and laughed and laughed. Finally, in a high-pitched squeaky voice Cerebus—doing an impression of "Yoohwhoo"—reads the end of chapter thirty as if it was the Happy Ending to a Good Judgment Fairy Tale:] *"And the man INCREASED EXCEEDINGLY! And had MUCH CATTELL! and MAYD SERUANTS! and MEN SERUANTS! and CAMELS! and ASSES!"*

Both of us [high-pitched squeaky voices, in unison]:
YAAAAAYYYY!!!

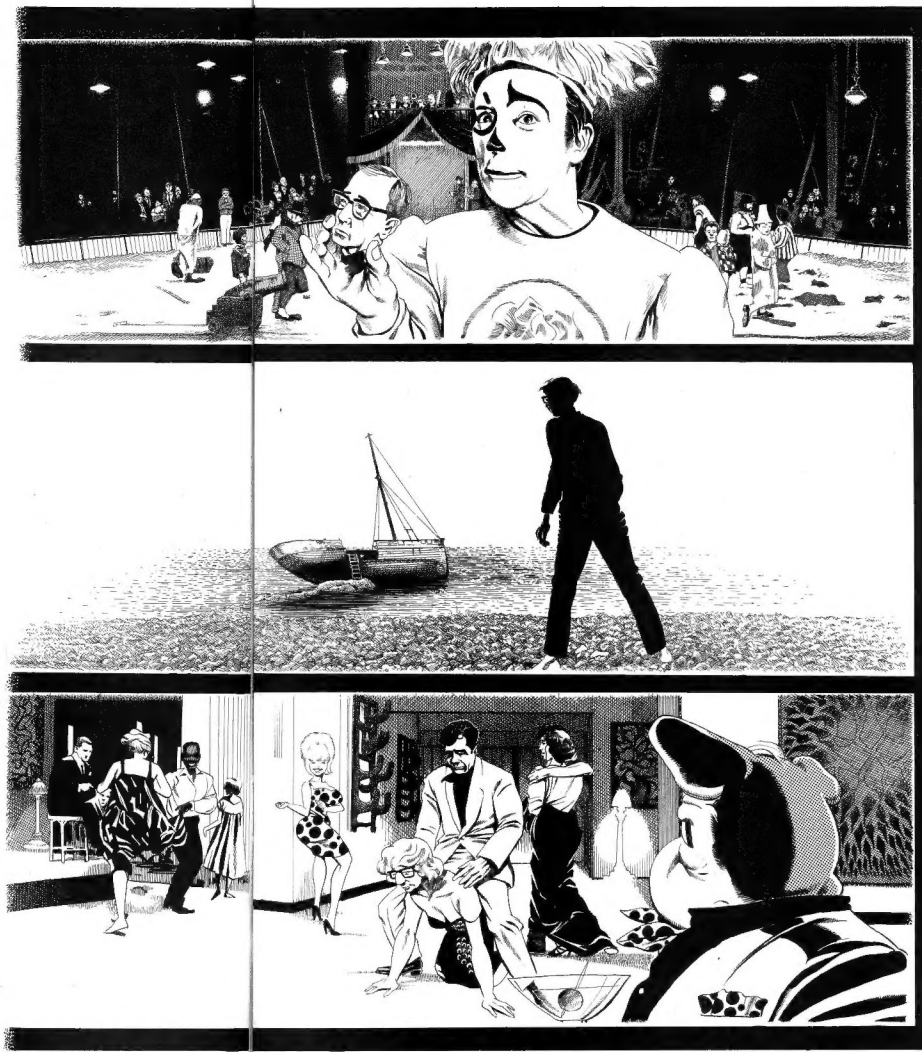
Cerebus:

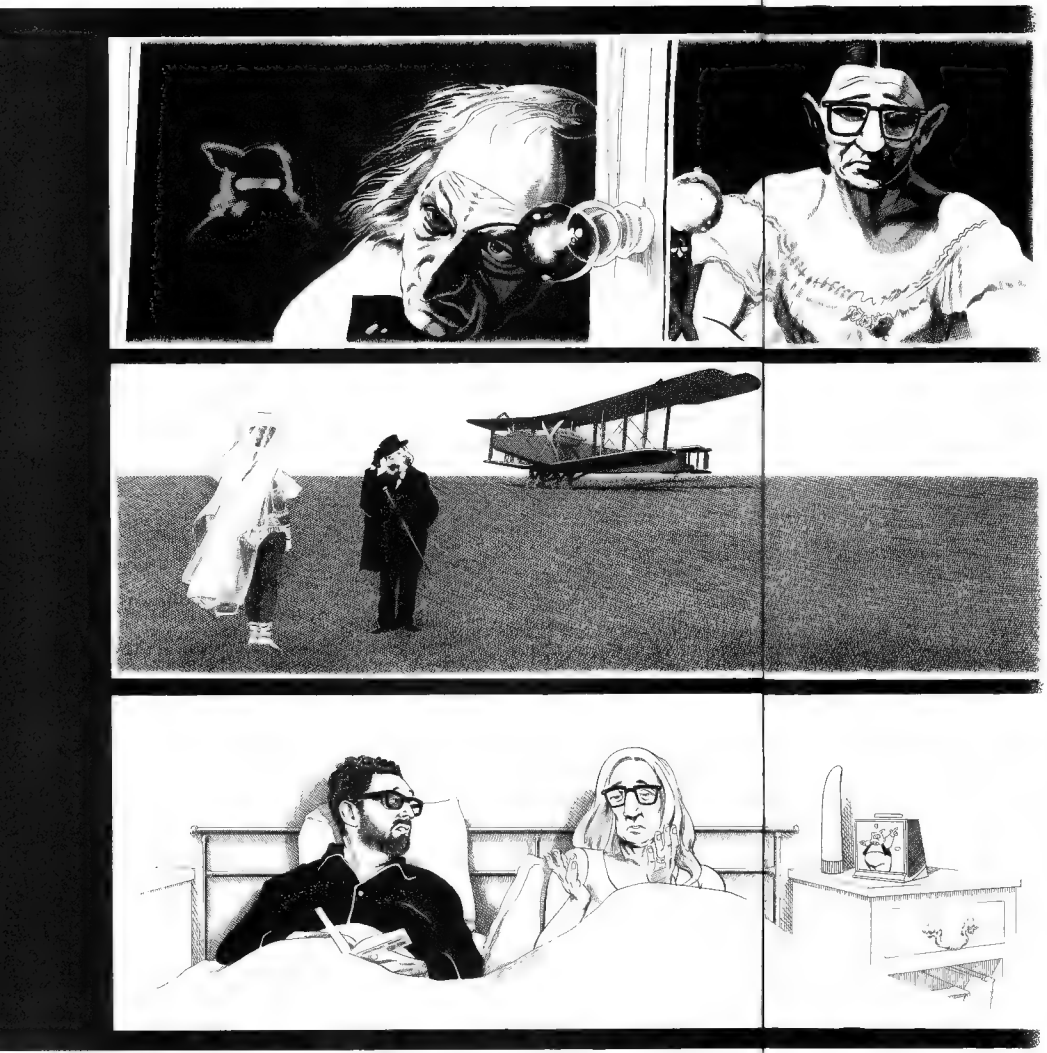
[after we've both managed to calm down and after I've transcribed a lot of the last part from memory with Cerebus' help] Okay. Chapter thirty-one. With God's long-delayed joke that he's been setting up since way back when Abraham was looking for a wife for Isaac. Anyway, the chapter starts with the [laughs] "down" side of Yoohwhoo's happy ending to chapter thirty. *"And he heard the words of Labans sonnes, saying Iacob hath taken away all that was our fathers: and of that which was of our fathers, hath hee gotten all this glory."* Double meaning there because Jacob is representing Yoohwhoo in the story—as the "younger" who has usurped the birthright and the blessing of the "elder"—so *both* Yoohwhoo *and* Jacob have definitely "taken away all that was our fathers' and of that which was *of* our fathers'." *"And Iacob behelde the countenance of Laban, and behold, it not toward him as yesterday and the day before."* [laughs] That's a nice way of putting it. *"And the Yoohwhoo said vnto Iacob, Returne vnto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I wil be with thee. And Iacob sent and called Rachel and Leah, to the field vnto his flocke, and said vnto them, I see your fathers countenance, that it is not toward mee as before: but the God of my father hath bene with me. And yee know, that with all my power, I haue serued your father. And your father hath deceiued mee, and changed my wages ten times."* [laughs] As Cerebus' Dad used to say, "I told you a *million* times, don't exaggerate." Laban changed Jacob's wages *three times*. *Once* when he fooled him into martying Leah, the *second* time when Jacob served him seven years for Rachel—and Cerebus isn't even sure you can call that "*changing*" his wages [laughs] since he served him seven years *per* wife—and the third time when he threatened to leave. [thinks] And, actually, *each* time, *Jacob* was the one who said what his wages were going to be. Laban just went along with it each time. So, basically, it's the same as God's relationship with Yoohwhoo. Yoohwhoo calls all the shots and *still* ends up complaining about how things turn out. [laughs] Jacob must've felt a *little* self-conscious—standing there in the midst of all of the cattle that he had cheated his uncle out of [laughs] while whining to Leah and Rachel about what a victim he is so, pretty much out of the blue, he adds, *"but God suffered him not to hurt me."* [laughs] This must've been news to God. And Leah and Rachel must've looked at each other a little funny, too, because then Jacob adds, *"If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages, then all the cattell bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ring-straked shalbe thy hire, then bare all the cattell ring-straked. Thus God hath taken away the cattell of your father, and giuen to mee."* [laughs] Cerebus pictures Jacob looking up at the sky, just in case there were any [laughs] stray lightning bolts on the way. So, after a few seconds, when Jacob is still [laughs] in one piece, he figures that all this whining and lying must be okay with God, so he decides to *really* start "chewing the scenery". *"And it came to passe at the time that the cattell conceiued, that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dreame, and behold, the rammes which leaped vpon the cattell ring-straked, speckled and grisled. And the Angel of God spake vnto me in a dreame, Iacob; And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift vp now thine eyes..."* [laughs] When Cerebus first read it, Cerebus was waiting for Jacob to say, "But, O Angel of God, I hath *already* lifted up mine eyes. It sayeth so in verse 10!" *"...and see, all the rammes which leape vpon the cattell ring-straked, speckled and grisled: for I haue seen all that Laban doeth vnto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou annoyntedst the pillar, where thou vowedst a vow vnto mee: now arise, get thee out from this land, and returne vnto the land of thy kindred."*

Konigsberg:
[crawling around on his hands and knees]
Marcello.

Cerebus:

[after glancing over at him] So, Jacob finishes his big monologue and looks at Rachel and Leah, who probably looked at each other. *"And Rachel and Leah answered, and said vnto him; is there yet any portion or inheritance for vs in our fathers house?"* [laughs and laughs] [high-pitched squeaky voice] "Jacob, *bubeleh*, if you're looking for an *argument*, you're talking to the *wrong* people. Dad's *broke*. *You* have all his cattle. Whose side do you *think* we're going to be on?" And then, realizing that that sounds a little [laughs]... mercenary?... Rachel and Leah decide to chew a little scenery of their own. *"Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite deuoured also our money."* Well, you know [laughs] not *exactly*. He *traded* them for fourteen years worth of hired help. As for "*their* money" [laughs] *What* money?





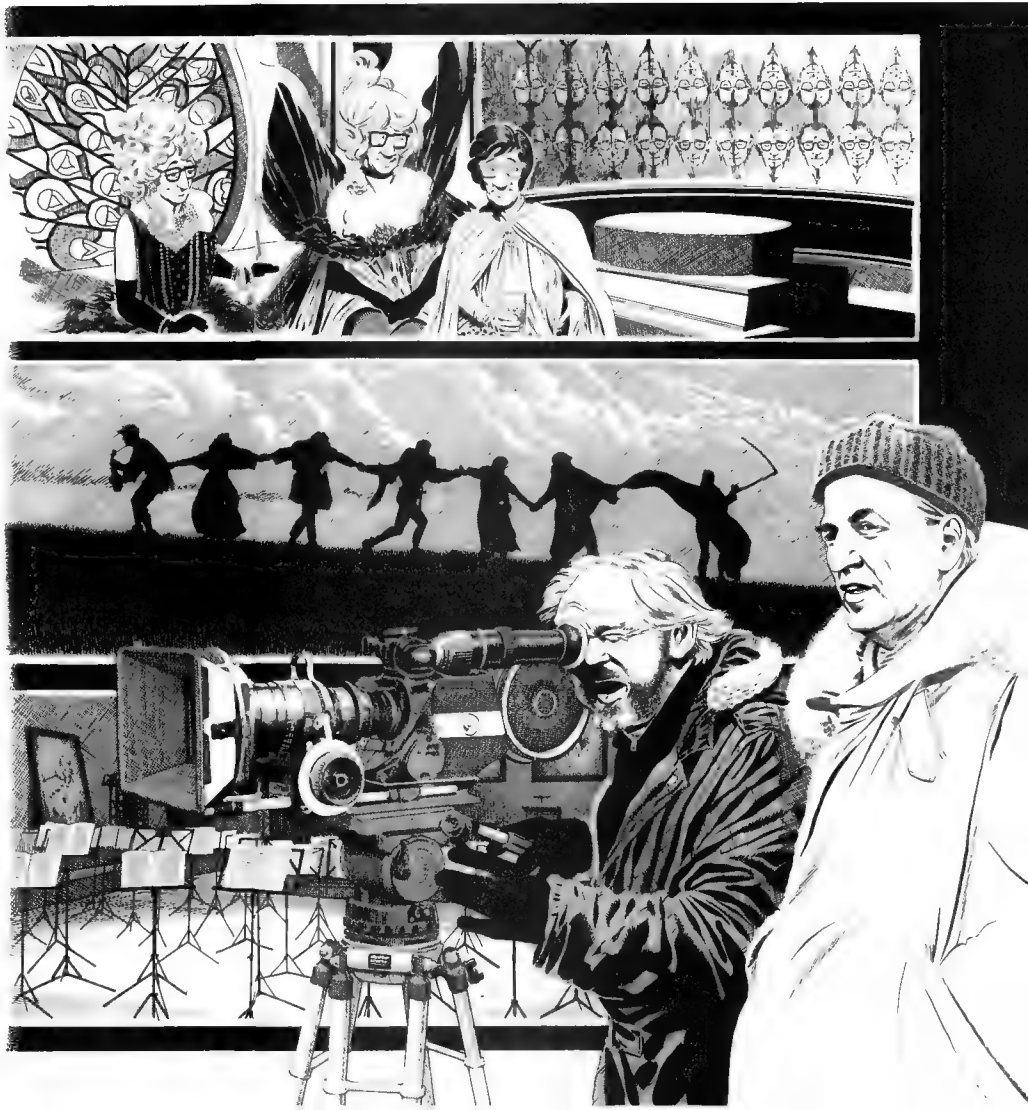
Jacob never said *anything* about giving *either* of them a *dowry*. He just said he'd work for Laban for seven years *if* Laban would give him Rachel for a wife—and then when he got *Leah* instead [laughs], it was *Jacob's idea* to work *another* seven years for the wife he *didn't* get the *first* time. It wasn't a matter of not reading the fine print. There *wasn't* any fine print to *read*. "Fourteen years of labour . . . for two wives? Jacob? You drive a hard bargain, you silver-tongued devil, [laughs] but you talked me into it." *"For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our childrens'."* [laughs] God might've *known* that *He* was going to get blamed for stealing all of Laban's cattle. And Leah and Rachel, well, [laughs] just standing there looking around at all *"their"* wealth and "their *children's"* wealth "on the hoof" — that that sneaky God fella swiped from them [laughs]—sort of lose their train of thought. But, being *women*—where *"their"* wealth and "their *children's"* wealth is at stake [laughs] — that lasts about as long as it takes them to figure out how much *all of Laban's cattle divided by eleven* comes out to—with *ten* shares for them and their sons [laughs] and *one* share for Jacob. *" . . . now then whatsoeuer God hath said vnto thee, doe."* In other words [laughs] Jacob? Let's git while the gittin's good [laughs]. And speaking of "gittin'"

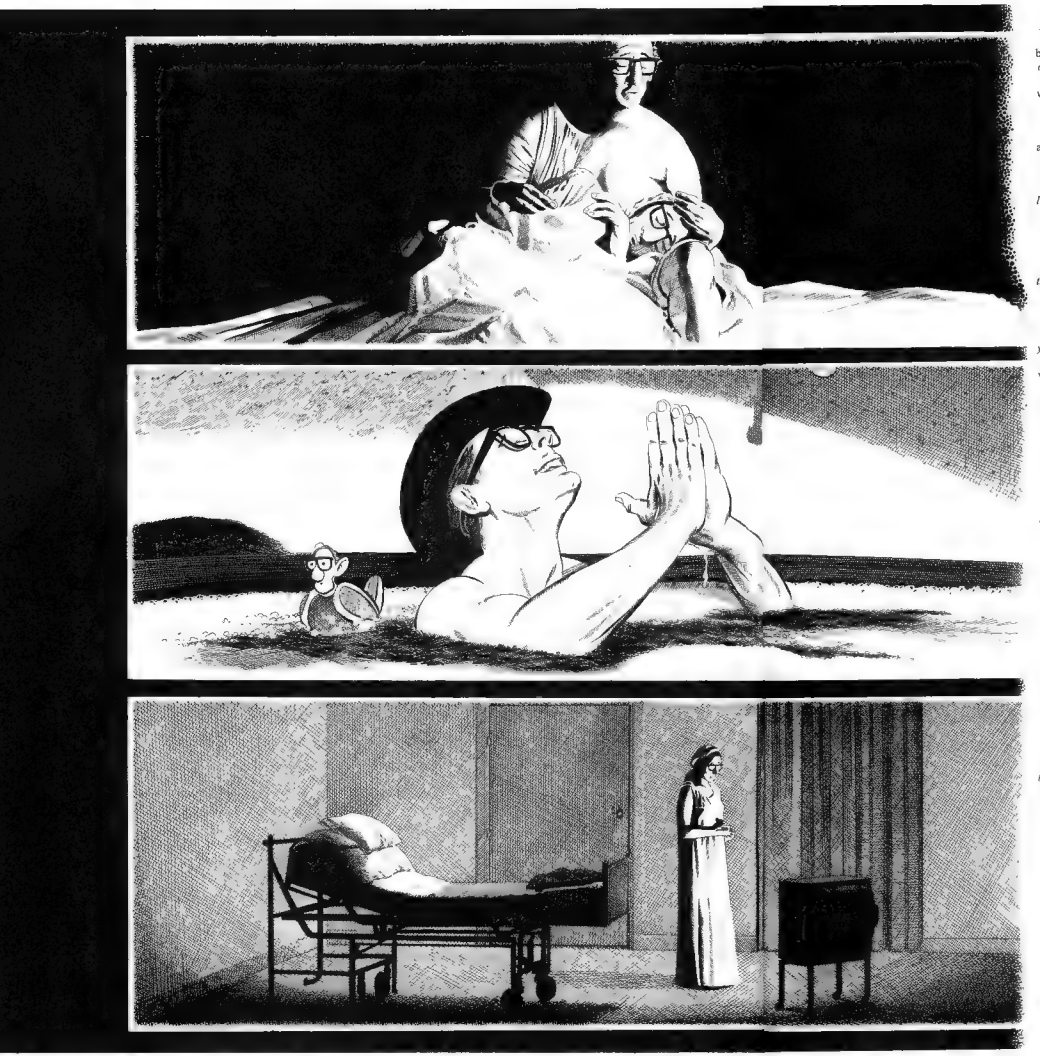
"Then Iacob rose vp, and set his sonnes and his wiues vpon camels. And he carried away all his cattell, and all his goods which he had gotten: the cattell of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan Aram, for to goe to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan." "Gotten," "getting" and then "gotten" again all in one sentence. [laughs] Jacob probably figures that if you say "gotten" or "getting" often enough, then that will mean that you didn't actually, you know, *steal* them. *"And Laban went to sheare his sheepe: and Rachel had stolen the Teraphim that her fathers."* Carved idols! Household gods! There it is. God's great joke. Abraham sent his servant all the way back to Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac instead of *"the daughters of the Canaanites amongst whom I dwell."* And Rebekah had said *"If Iacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life doe me?"* And she got Isaac to send *Jacob* all the way back to the "land of his kindred" to find a wife. You know. You can never be *too careful* about who you let your son marry. And guess what? The whole family is full of *nothing but pagans!* [laughs and laughs] *Rebekah* was a pagan! *Leah* was a pagan! *Laban* was a pagan! *Rachel* was a pagan! Not only was Rachel a *pagan*, but she also wasn't much of a *daughter*—obviously thinking to herself, "Listen, as long as my husband, *Jacob*, has stolen all of Dad's *cattle*, what can *I* find of Dad's that's worth stealing? Oh, Dad's *household pagan idols! They* might come in handy for something!" *"And Iacob stale away, the heart of Laban, in that he told him not that he fled. So hee fled with all that hee had, and he rose vp and passed ouer the Riuer, and set his face the mount Gilead. And it was tolde Laban on the third day, that Iacob was fled. And hee tooke his brethren with him, and pursued after him seuen dayes iourney, and they overtooke him in the mount Gilead. And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dreame by night, and saide vnto him, Take heed that thou speake not to Iacob from good to bad."* That's pretty interesting. God *and* Yoohwhoo know that Jacob used black magic—under *instructions* from Yoohwhoo—to steal all of Laban's sheep and cattle. God *and* Yoohwhoo know that Jacob *lied* when he said that God had come to Jacob in a dream and *told* Jacob that God was going to *help* Jacob to steal Laban's cattle. God *and* Yoohwhoo know that Jacob's wives are pagans—pagans who have *accused God* of stealing Laban's cattle and giving them to Jacob. *And* God and Yoohwhoo *both* know that Rachel has stolen her father's "gods" and is taking them with her to Yoohwhoo's garden. So, Laban is about to catch up with Jacob. And Yoohwhoo, of course, *can't wait* to see what God is going to *do* to Jacob and his wives for rebelling against Him all those different ways. And what does God *do*? He comes to Laban in a dream and tells him *not* to go "from good to bad" when he's *speaking to Jacob*! [laughs]. Is that *it*? Yoohwhoo must have asked, Is that *IT*?! [laughs] having expected God to *destroy* Jacob and his wives or to *curse* Jacob and his wives. *"And Laban said to Iacob, What hast thou done that thou has stolen away vnawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captiues with the sword?"* God is setting up a knockout punch here. Yoohwhoo doesn't see it coming and walks right into it. See, Jacob is heading back to Yoohwhoo's garden which is *still* guarded by the Cherubim with the flaming sword, the Cherubim whose job it is to keep men *out* of the garden. God is basically accusing Yoohwhoo of having kept all of God's "daughters" captive. [laughs] God just bypasses Yoohwhoo's *earlier* story that the Cherubim and the flaming sword were there to "keep the way of the Yoohwhoo," to keep the women in and the men out. It's a new way of looking at it, that's for sure—*and* a way of looking at it that is *guaranteed* to irritate Yoohwhoo. See, what God is saying is that Hawwa and her daughters *represented* Yoohwhoo in the garden, sure, but, like everyone and everything else, they were *created by* God. Not only does Yoohwhoo have nothing to do with getting women *pregnant*, God is saying, Yoohwhoo had nothing to do with *creating* women in the first place! Laban goes on. *"Wherefore didst thou flie away secretly, and has stollen me and didst not tell mee?"* Jacob must've have *wondered* at that "stolen *me*" line. It's God's way of letting Yoohwhoo know that God knows all about the carved idols that Rachel has stolen. It's God's way of letting Yoohwhoo know that—however many carved idols might exist and however many people believe in them as gods, God *is still* . . . and *always will be* . . . God. Laban or Rachel *choosing to believe* that these little carved figures are *gods* is a side issue for God and it doesn't change the fact that Laban and Rachel are God's creations. Substituting carved idols for God, God is indicating, is the same kind of mistake as Laban's "slip of the tongue" in substituting *himself* for the Teraphim. God is *less interested* in whether Laban *believes* in his household gods than He is in whether Laban is doing good or not.

Which, God indicates, Laban *has* been — that is, good — in his dealings with Jacob, so far. Which, if you think about it, is true. He pulled a *prank* on Jacob, sure, substituting Leah for Rachel. But, Jacob still got six sons out of the deal. Which he *wouldn't* have gotten just with Rachel. And Laban *always* asked Jacob what Jacob's wages should be. He never said, this is what I'm going to pay you. Fourteen years of labour for two women —well, *sure* it's a raw deal.

But it was *Jacob's* idea, not *Laban's*. God is saying that *Laban's* situation with *Jacob* is

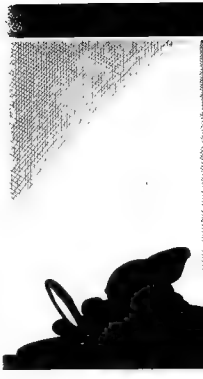
comparable to *God's* situation with *Yoohwhoo*. God has been willing to do whatever Yoohwhoo wanted done and has been doing it. Yoohwhoo, every step of the way, for thousands of years has picked *which way* the story was going to go next. God, like Laban, has given Yoohwhoo everything she has ever asked for and Yoohwhoo, like Jacob, has taken *everything* for *herself* leaving *God*, like *Laban*, with *nothing*. As Laban says to Jacob about Jacob running out on him without a word, *"That I might have sent thee away with . ."* [laughs] At this point, Laban must've had to pause and *think*. "With *what*?" [laughs] Jacob's already *stolen* all of Laban's cattle and *Rachel's* stolen Laban's carved idols. *" . . .with mirth, and with songs, with tabret and with harpe."* [laughs] That about sums up what Laban has to offer *anyone* at this point. A few jokes and some songs *And hast not suffered me to kisse my sonnes and my daughters? Thou hast now done foolishly in doing."* God, speaking through Laban again, indicates that He, like Laban, still *loves* Rachel. . *and* Leah... *and* Reuben... *and* Simeon... *and* Levi . *and*...you know, *everyone*. They're *all* God's creations. And he loves them *just* the way Laban loves *his* daughters and *his* grandsons. [thinks] Well, actually, a *lot more* than that. [laughs] God wouldn't trade *His* creations for fourteen years of someone's manual labour. *"It is in the power of my hand to doe you hurt but the God of your father spake vnto mee yesternight, saying, Take thou heed, that thou speake not to Iacob either good or bad."* Well, okay. [laughs] Laban is *obviously, definitely, no-doubt-about-it a pagan*. God tells him to "*speake not to Iacob* from *good to bad*" and to *Laban* that's the same as saying, *"speake not to Iacob* either *good or bad."* Fortunately [laughs] Yoohwhoo doesn't know the difference either. *"And now thou wouldest needes bee gone, because thou sore longedst after thi fathers house.."* Good *triple* meaning on *that* one, since Jacob is *not only* returning to *Isaac's* house, he's *also* returning to *Yoohwhoo's* garden—where sin "crouched at the door"—and he's also the one who anointed the pillar and created the *first* "Beth-El", the first "house of *God*" So God is saying that Jacob has, so far, turned out to be just as much *God's* "son" as he has turned out to be *Yoohwhoo's* "son," even though he was *supposed to be* "the supplanter." Yoohwhoo's big secret weapon, the younger who took away the elder's birthright and blessing. And, at that point, God *stops* speaking through Laban, so [laughs] that's it for any fancy *triple* meanings Now that Laban is just Laban again, he flat out asks, without missing a beat, *wherefore hast thou stollen my gods?"* And *Jacob*, without missing a beat, answers, *"Because I was afrad, for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me."* [laughs] Which must've left both of them sort of blinking and staring at each other See, because it's *Yoohwhoo* speaking *through* Jacob [laughs] *She* sees a *double meaning* and is answering *God's* earlier question about "carrying away my daughters as captives with the sword?" That is, God wanted to know *why* Yoohwhoo—way, way, way, back when, in the garden—had used her knowledge-of-good-and-evil to summon the Cherubim with the flaming sword. Yoohwhoo knew *exactly* what God was asking about. Any time one of Adam's descendants is coming back into the garden, the subject comes up again. Only, Yoohwhoo thought that *God was still speaking* when Laban said, *wherefore hast thou stollen my gods?"* See, because *that's* how Yoohwhoo looked on the women in the garden. Eating the bad fruit *led* Yoohwhoo to believe she was a *god*, led her to believe *Hawwa* was a *god*, led her to believe that *all of the women in the garden* were gods and that they *all gave birth* to gods—whenever Yoohwhoo *decided* that they would. So, when Yoohwhoo heard the question, *"wherefore hast thou stollen my gods?* she answered right away *Because I was afraid, for I said, Peraduenture thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me."* [laughs] And, boy, would Yoohwhoo have wanted to take back *that* answer the moment it was out of her mouth She's just admitted that Hawwa and all of the women in the garden were *God's* "thy *daughters*" not *Yoohwhoo's* daughters. So, then [laughs] poor Yoohwhoo has to listen while Jacob—who represents her in the story and who [laughs] figures *he* was just talking about *Leah and Rachel* and who has just "come to" and figures that he's answered Laban's questions in the wrong order [laughs] for some reason that escapes him - starts chewing the scenery again, as [laughs] only Jacob can do. *"With whomsoeuer thou findest thy gods, let him not liue."* Big wince for Yoohwhoo *"...before our brethren discerne thou what is thine with me and take it to thee."* *Another* big wince for Yoohwhoo. *There* you go. *There's* the Big Question that God—*now*—doesn't even *have* to ask, since Yoohwhoo's *own* words—*Yoohwhoo's own words*—have asked *and* answered the question. The question, of course, is: *What or who doesn't belong to God, if God decided to actually claim* he, *claim* she, *or claim* it? And the answer, of course, is "no one" and "no thing," because God created them all They are *all* God's Whoever or whatever they are. And *that* meaning is as clear as the *double* meaning *Yoohwhoo* had about as much right to claim *all of the women in the garden* as *Rachel* has to claim *Laban's household gods* Which is to say, no right at all. So, now [laughs] with Yoohwhoo curled up into a miserable little ball somewhere in the middle of the earth, it's back to the surface story. *" . .for Iacob knew not that Rachel had stollen them And Laban went into Iacobs tent, and into Leahs tent, and into the two maid seruants tents. but he found not Then went he out of Leahs tent, and entred into Rachels tent."* This is it, Yoohwhoo, must've thought Laban's going to find the teraphim in Rachel's tent and Laban's going to kill Rachel because Jacob told him that he could. *"Now Rachel had taken the images and put them in the camels furniture and sate vpon them and Laban felt all the tent, but found not And shee said to her father, Let it not displease my lord, that I cannot rise vp before thee. for the custome of women is vpon mee and he searched but found not the images."* More than a little embarrassing, having to pretend to her father that she's having her period (which is what Yoohwhoo must've looked like in the middle of the earth after God's knockout punch), but, you know. [laughs] Better that than ending up dead So, all in all, an episode that Yoohwhoo is more than anxious to put behind her, a day that she would definitely rather forget. But [laughs] it ain't over yet. Jacob, now that Laban hasn't found the teraphim, is definitely in the mood to chew a little scenery. *"And Iacob*

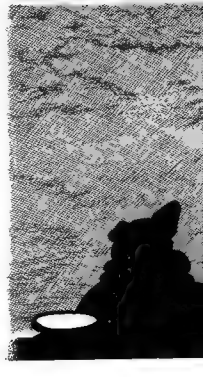




was wroth with Laban and Iacob answered and said to Laban, what my trespasse? ' And Yoohwhoo [laughs] curls up into a tighter little ball in the middle of the earth. *" ... what my sinne, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?"* And [laughs] Yoohwhoo pulls the hot water bottle a little tighter across her belly. *"Whereas thou hast felt all my stuffe what hast thou found of all thy household stuffe? set it here before my brethren, and thy brethren, that they may iudge betwixt vs both."* And [laughs] Yoohwhoo wonders where she left her aspirin and if she feels well enough to get up and go look for it. *"Thys twentie yeeres I with thee thy ewes and thy shee goates haue not cast their yong, and the rammes of thy flocke haue I not eaten."* The little reminder of Yoohwhoo's she-goat and he-ram covenant with Abraham [laughs] probably convinced Yoohwhoo that, no, she didn't really feel well enough to get up and go look for her aspirin. *"That which was torne, I brought not vnto thee I bare the losse of it;"* That isn't really what I sound like, is it? Yoohwhoo wonders. *"of my hand didst thou require it, whether stollen by day, or stollen by night."* [laughs] Cerebus pictures a little tiny "angel" of God appearing in front of Yoohwhoo with a copy of verse five of chapter nine: *"And surely the blood of your liues will I require, at the hand of euery beast will I require it & at the hand of man, at the hand of euery mans brother will I require the life of man. Who so sheddeth mans blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man."* Which, Cerebus is willing to bet [laughs] didn't make Yoohwhoo feel a *whole* lot better. At that point, she was probably hoping that Jacob was finished. [laughs] No such luck. *"I was in y day, the drought consumed mee, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes Thus haue I bene twentie yeres in thy house: I serued thee fourteene yeeres for thy two daughters and sixe yeres for thy cattel, and thou hast changed my wages ten times."* Three times, Jacob, Yoohwhoo was probably thinking. He changed your wages *three* times. And it was *your* idea each time. *"Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the feare of Isaac had bin with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now emptie God hath seene mine affliction, and the labour of my hands, & rebuked yesternight."* Yoohwhoo really starts to "get it" finally, at this point, Cerebus thinks. Here's this guy who has stolen everything in the vicinity that wasn't nailed down and he stands there whining about how *"God hath seene mine affliction."* From the day he was *born*, Jacob has had everything his own way and has stolen everything that he wanted that *wasn't* his. And to what does Jacob attribute the fact that he's gotten everything his own way since the day he was born? To *"the God of my father, the God of Abraham"*. [laughs] Jacob can't even get *that* right. *He steals his own father's father. Because it's more impressive to be the son of Abraham than the son of Isaac. Jacob will claim to be* Abraham's *son the same way that he claimed to be* Laban's brother, *stealing his own mother's brother.* Abraham *isn't his father.* Abraham *is* Isaac's *father.* Laban *isn't his brother,* Laban *is* Rebekah's *brother. Jacob didn't* want *to be the* younger *son, he wanted to be the* elder *son, so he tricked the elder son out of his birthright and his blessing.* [the voice of a whiny two-year-old] *He doesn't* want *to be Jacob. He wants to be* Esau. *He doesn't* want *to be Jacob. He wants to be* Rebekah. *He doesn't* want *to be Jacob. He wants to be* Isaac [laughs] *Do you understand, Yoohwhoo? Do you* finally *understand?* This *is exactly* what you are like *Yoohwhoo?* This *Is Your Life!* I mean, how can she *miss* it? Jacob is standing there with *all* of Laban's cattle that he's *cheated him out of* and is actually saying out loud that if it *hadn't been* for the God of "*his*" father Abraham and *"the feare of Isaac"*— [laughs] Abraham and Jacob get to *share* God, you'll notice, whereas all Jacob figures that he got from his *own* father, Isaac, was Isaac's "fear of God" from the near-sacrifice back in chapter twenty-two—according to Jacob if it hadn't been for the *God* of Abraham and the *fear* of Isaac, Laban would've sent Jacob away *empty* by now! Laban has *nothing* and Jacob has *everything* because Jacob *cheated* Laban out of *everything*, but, to Jacob, that's only right because Laban intended to take everything away from Jacob! And *Laban*, according to Jacob, is supposed to feel *guilty* because of what Jacob *imagines* Laban *intended* to do! Now, *that's* chutzpah! Anyway, Jacob finally runs out of steam, at that point. And Yoohwhoo, curled up in a tight little ball in the middle of the earth, must've thought. Hoo boy. Here it comes. And [laughs], it sure starts off *sounding* that way, God speaking through Laban, directly to Yoohwhoo, through Jacob: *"And Laban answered and said vnto Iacob, These daughters are my daughters..."* "Check," thought Yoohwhoo, miserably. *"...and these children are my children..."* "Check," thought Yoohwhoo, miserably. *"...and these cattell are my cattell ."* "The cattle!? Whoa, no," thought Yoohwhoo. "We had an agreement that...that ..." [laughs] Cerebus pictures a little "angel" of God appearing in front of Yoohwhoo with verse twenty-five of chapter one, *"And God made the beast of the earth after his kinde and cattell after their kinde, and every thing that creepeth vpon the earth, after his kinde: and God saw that good."* "Check," thought Yoohwhoo [laughs] really wishing she had an aspirin. Or ten. *"...and all that thou seest, is mine."* "Check," thought Yoohwhoo. And then [laughs], and then God just lets her stew in her own Yoohwhoo juices for a few minutes. And then Laban says, *"and what can I doe this day vnto these my daughters, or vnto their children which they haue borne? Now therefore come thou, let vs make a couenant, I and thou and let it be for a witnesse betweene me and thee."* Yoohwhoo must've wondered if she was hearing right. A *covenant*? A covenant between God and Yoohwhoo? After Jacob has stolen everything from Laban that wasn't nailed down? After Yoohwhoo has finally been forced to recognize just how self-centered and ungrateful and whiny and immoral she's been all along? And God isn't going to do anything against "His daughters" or "unto their children"? "Their" children—sons *and* daughter—which "they" have borne? "*Their*" children? *"And Iacob tooke a stone, and set it vp for a pillar."* [laughs] Whatever the covenant is, Jacob's all for it. Jacob can't believe *his* ears any more than Yoohwhoo can believe *her* ears. *"And Iacob saide vnto his brethren, Gather stones and they tooke stones, and made an heape, and they did eate there vpon the heape."* [laughs] That's very funny. "Jacob said unto his *brethren*" [laughs] Jacob didn't have any "brethren"—except Esau. Jacob has just taken himself down a couple of pegs, he's so relieved that Laban isn't going to take everything away from him. Instead of claiming to have the "God of my father, the God of Abraham" on his side, supplanting his own father, in his own eyes he's now just [laughs] "one of the kids"—a brother to his sons—"Reuben, Simeon, Levi? Do as your brother Jacob asks and gather up these stones." *"And Laban called it Iegar-*

Sahaduthа," that is, "the heap of witness" [breaks out laughing] God's making fun of Yoohwhoo again, going *all the way back* to the covenant between Abimelech and Abraham, when Abraham, representing Yoohwhoo, set the seven ewe lambs by themselves and had them "witness" the agreement. For *this* agreement between *Laban* and *Jacob*, God chooses for *His* witnesses [laughs] a pile of rocks. And, hey, why not? God created men out of the dust of the earth. Rocks are just *bigger* dust. Also, God and His Angels theoretically *live* in the earth, now, ever since Jacob had his ladder dream where they traded places with Yoohwhoo and *her* "angels". And, also thanks to Jacob—when he pours oil on a rock—it becomes "Beth-El," a "house of God". So, [laughs] good deal. Jacob and his "brethren" will gather a bunch of rocks—and Jacob has *already anointed* one of the rocks as a *pillar*, as a *"house of God"*— and the pile of rocks will then serve as witnesses to the covenant with Laban. [laughs] As long as nobody asks the rocks to *sign* anything, it should work out okay. *"But Jacob called it Galeed."* [laughs] It's *Laban's* covenant, but Jacob, of course—always the Supplanter—just has to *supplant* the name that *Laban* wants to give it with the name *Jacob* wants to give it. *"And Laban said, This heape is a witnesse betweene mee and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed. And Mizpah"* that is, a beacon or a watch-tower, *". . . for he said, The Yoohwhoo watch betweene me and thee when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take wiues besides my daughters, no is with vs."* "No is with us"? That's kind of a confusing part and, no matter how many times Cerebus reads it [laughs] it doesn't get any *less* confusing. The best Cerebus can figure is that it's a *Yoohwhoo* answer—that is, a lie mixed in with the truth. "No," as in Jacob *agrees* not to take any wives besides Laban's daughters and "is with us" because Jacob already *has* taken wives besides Laban's daughters—he's had two children each with Bilhah and Zilpah. Bilhah and Zilpah don't count as wives? Because they're "with us"? That is, because they're Rachel and Leah's *handmaids* they don't *count* as wives? [thinks] Does Laban even *know* that *four* of his grandsons were grown inside his daughters' handmaids? Too many questions and no answers. So, as Cerebus sees it, that leads to the reminder, *"See. God is witnesse betwixt mee and thee."* Laban might not know the truth and Jacob [laughs] wouldn't know the truth if it came up and bit him on the ass. But there *is* truth. And God is the only *sure witness to* that truth *"And Laban said to Iacob, Behold this heape, and behold this pillar, which I haue cast betwixt mee and thee This heape be witnesse, and this pillar be witnesse, that I will not pass ouer this heape to thee, and that thou shalt not pass ouer this heape, and this pillar vnto me, for harme. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, iudge betwixt vs."* That's pretty good. [laughs] Cerebus liked *that* part a lot. Finally, *Laban* comes up with something that Jacob *can't* supplant. See, it depends on *which* Nahor Laban's talking about. Abraham was the *younger* Nahor's *brother*. So, Laban *could* be saying that the God of Terah—the God of Abraham and Nahor's father, Laban and Jacob's mutual *great*-grandfather—would judge between them. But, since *Terah's* father was *also* named Nahor, the God of *that* Nahor's father would be the God of Serug. [laughs] What Laban is doing is going way, way, way back in their mutual genealogy to the point where Laban and Jacob not only have the same *great*-grandfather but even *further* back to where they also have the same *great-great great* grandfather and, consequently, there can be no mistake that they're making a covenant in the name of the same God. On *his* side of the family, Jacob doesn't have an Abram or an Isaac that goes back further than "father" and "grandfather". Nowhere near as far back as the name Nahor goes. Small wonder that [laughs] *"And Iacob sware by the feare of his father Isaac"* Laban scared the you-know-what out of Jacob, going that far back in their mutual family history. *"Then Iacob offred sacrifice vpon the mount, and called his brethren to eate bread, and they did eate bread, and tarried all night in the mount And early in the morning Laban rose vp and kissed his sonnes, and his daughters, and blessed them and Laban departed, and returned vnto his place."* Of course, there's another level of meaning to all the rocks that Jacob and his "brethren" gathered and the rock that Jacob anointed as "Beth-El". When it was just *Jacob*, way back in Luz, he anointed the *pillar* and in doing so anointed himself as the *custodian* of the "House of God," the guy with the oil. But, the fact that he gathered all the rocks with his "brethren," puts Jacob and his sons on an equal footing. They're *all* represented by the rocks that they gathered. But *one* of those rocks got anointed—which, if Jacob had told his *sons* to gather them, would still be Jacob, the *father*. But the fact that he told his *"brethren"* to gather them means that *one* of Jacob's sons is now the heir to the covenant with Abraham, the covenant with Isaac, one of Jacob's sons is the "anointed one". It has to be one of his *sons*, because Jacob can't inherit his own inheritance. [laughs] If *anyone* could manage it, it would be *Jacob*. But even *Jacob* can't supplant *himself*. The *logical* person to inherit the covenant, to become the "anointed one" is Reuben, but the problem with Reuben is that he's the *eldest* son. Which is the same problem with Dan and with Gad, who are the *eldest* sons that grew inside of Bilhah and Zilpah. If the *eldest* turns out to be the "anointed one" then all of Yoohwhoo's trouble in getting the *younger* to supplant the *elder* goes for naught and the elder assumes the covenant again. *No wonder God, through Laban, was willing to call them "their" sons, the sons of Laban's daughters! No wonder God, through Laban, made Jacob swear not to take another wife! No wonder God was willing, through Laban, to just kiss everyone goodbye and say, "have fun!" This gets really complicated! Yoohwhoo has to find a way to make sure that the covenant with Abraham and Isaac gets passed on to either Simeon or Levi or ..*[laughs] And suddenly, Yoohwhoo realizes that *that* wouldn't work either. Simeon is *older* than Levi. *Naphtali* is *younger* than *Dan*, but Naphtali is *older* than *Gad*. *Asher* is *younger* than *Gad*, but *Asher* is *older* than *Issachar* and so on. It's "either-or". Either the covenant passes on to the youngest, or the covenant goes back to the elder. The youngest son is Joseph, but Joseph is the *only* son who grew inside of Rachel. If *Joseph* inherits the covenant, as the *only son* of Rachel and Jacob, then Yoohwhoo is admitting that there's only *One God*. But if anyone *else* inherits the covenant, he'll be *older* than Joseph which will mean the covenant goes back to the elder who *represents* God. Jacob has sworn not to take another wife, so that leaves Yoohwhoo only *one* choice: Rachel has to get pregnant and have a son *younger than* Joseph who can inherit the covenant. But [laughs] God already blocked that square. If Yoohwhoo tells God to make Rachel pregnant again, *Rachel* is going to think that it was *Yoohwhoo* who did it, which means that Yoohwhoo goes all the way back to "square one" and forfeits all of the progress she's made in making Good Judgments. God is forcing the issue. Forcing Yoohwhoo to either a) admit that there's only One God and lose her hold on the covenant or b) hold onto the covenant but go all the way back to "square one" in her relationship with God.





Konigsberg:
Marcello.

Cerebus:
Cerebus really wishes he would stop saying that.

Howard E. Day Memorial Prize 2002

The genesis of the Howard E. Day Memorial Prize perhaps deserves a little explanation. When Gerhard had first suggested the idea, I had drawn up a press release which I sent to all of the major comics media last year in advance of Bob Corby's SPACE (Small Press and Alternative Comics Expo) assuming that they would all at least mention the Prize and whatever misinformation and recrimination and denunciation would inevitably follow (because Dave Sim was involved), well, let the chips fall where they may. No one printed the press release so the usual process whereby I express my intention to accomplish something worthwhile and it is then transformed into a Misogynist Plot Against the Good Denizens of Comic-Book Land on the Internet (while simultaneously imparting the information I intend to disseminate) was subverted and the Misogynist Plot represented by the instituting of the Howard E. Day Memorial Prize was allowed to unfold in complete obscurity except for those to whom it pertained: the creator-exhibitors at SPACE and, thereby, came as something of a surprise to *Cerebus* readers when it showed up in the back of the book about a year ago at this time.

The genesis of the Day Prize is bound up with the story of how I came to attend Bob's SPACE show and dates back to the years (1993-1995) when I was doing my best to promote self-publishing—having been forced into the realization that there was no conventional way to promote *Cerebus*. The book sells what it sells. A 26-city tour of conventions and comic-book stores in 1992 with thousands and thousands of dollars spent on publicity with a real-world public relations outfit which had garnered radio, television, newspaper and alternative newspaper coverage for *Cerebus* in every major market in the United States had done virtually nothing to move sales up. We made a percentage of our money back and were, by 1993, back at square one. The only obvious effect of the 1992 Tour was the fact that virtually every convention and signing had been attended by numerous self-publisher wannabe's who a) kindly brought me copies of their work and b) wanted me to help them. Having, as I say, come to the conclusion that I couldn't help *Cerebus*, I tried to figure out how I might help some of these other fellows, instead. With this in mind, when he called to ask if I was interested, I agreed to share a booth with Martin Wagner of *Hepcats* fame (now, *Hepcats* notoriety, but then, *Hepcats* fame) at the Capital City Trade Show in 1993 (even though Aardvark-Vanaheim could certainly have afforded its own booth). Part of the deal was that you were supposed to provide a free gift for each retailer, so we had to come up with 1,000 or so...somethings. Martin proposed a t-shirt, I think it was. At some astronomical per unit cost of $10 each or something which was, I suspect, part of the reason he wanted to split a booth. I thought it over for a while and called him back and suggested that we do a jam print, instead, of Cerebus and one of the *Hepcats* characters that we would sign at our booth and which would probably cost us around $15 each to quick print. That, to say the least, sounded like a plan to Martin. That was one of the ways that I helped Martin. There were others:

I tipped him to the idea of shaking hands with the retailers who came up, to making eye-contact, to listening to them and treating them like people and not to just move them through like interchangeable cold cuts, signing the jam print we had done to the retailer or (hopefully) to his or her store, and to do a quick sketch so he or she would put the print up in his or her store and it would function as on-going promotion. I got into serious trouble with Capital City because we soon had a line about a city block long of retailers who were supposed to be circulating to all of the other booths but who all wanted a free autograph and sketch once they had seen them. Basically, we were told to move the retailers through like interchangeable cold cuts. "Martin and I will get right on that, sir, yes sir." And then Martin and I would go on shaking hands and schmoozing and signing the prints to the stores and collecting business cards (which we also got in trouble for).

Anyway, this was the place where Jeff Smith came up to where Martin and I were signing and, as unobtrusively as possible, handed me the first three issues of *Bone* and told me that Larry Marder had told him that he definitely had to give copies of his book to me. As I did with everyone who gave me their book(s), I thanked him and told him I looked forward to reading them.

Shortly thereafter, I came up with what I thought would be a genuine help to this..."wave"...of new self-publishers: renting a hotel suite at conventions and trade shows where self-publishers could get together. That wasn't their idea, of course. Their idea was, invariably, to get a major amount of individual "face time" with Dave Sim and to have him impart the magical incantation that would make them overnight millionaires (having seen that look on many faces, I'll state quite frankly that the look on Jeff Smith's face was no different than any other "wannabe" I had encountered before or have encountered since). To be able to say to a glittery-eyed "wannabe" who was looking for major Dave Sim "face time" "...actually, I'm hosting a self-publisher get-together in 1125-1127 at the Marriott at 8 o'clock tonight, why don't you drop by?" led them to believe that all their "face time" dreams had come true (which they hadn't) and, in my view, ended up being of greater benefit to most of them than actual "face time" would have been. Since not everyone could talk to me at the same time, they ended up talking to each other

which led to a lot of (pardon my 90s jargon) "networking" which is still in place to this day. "Networking" which I thought at the time, and still think, was of far greater value than most of what I could tell a newcomer in a direct market world that was at least as different from 1977 as 2002 is from 1993. Later, I invited retailers, as well, so everyone was getting completely current information on the direct market. Not from me, but from each other. I took a "hit" personally in doing this because a lot of the comic-book "hangers-on" didn't like the idea of not being able to get in to Dave Sim's Party (the 1986 "Aardvarks over San Diego" party having assumed legendary proportions by 1993). I made a conscious decision to take that "hit" having recognized that the momentum in the comic-book field has always been and will always be to subsume—and thereby marginalize—self-publishing, and this would have been nowhere truer than in the easy transformation of a self-publishing hospitality suite into a Dave Sim Party by the "Fuck Art! Let's Dance!" hangers-on, those for whom (let me be perfectly blunt) convention partying is not a peripheral aspect but rather the entire *raison d'être* of his...or, usually, her... comic-book career.

(Still the idea persisted that if Dave Sim is in his suite, there must be a great party going on. I remember the trade show where Neil Gaiman – who had been flown in by DC to promote *Sandman* — calling up to say he had heard I was having a get-together and would it be all right if he dropped by? I looked around at the roomful of retailers and self-publishers—sketching, autographing and "networking" like mad—and said, Sure, Neil, come on up. I must say, to Neil's credit that he was actually pretty good-natured about signing way too many autographs and getting his picture taken way too many times before he discretely took his leave and went to find after-hours entertainment that was a little more, you know, "after hours-ish")

Apart from that, I provided a forum in the back of *Cerebus* to publicize self-published books that I, personally, thought more-than-competent, did joint jam prints at industry trade shows with novice self-publishers whose work I, personally, thought more-than-competent (most, if not all of whom—I hasten to point out—were either mostly or completely ignorant of *Cerebus* or thought very poorly of *Cerebus*. They were not *Cerebus* fans. They were Dave Sim wannabe's. A fact which I fully accepted from the outset. I can't say I liked any of the individuals I came in contact with. Liking them as people wasn't the point. I wanted to assist self-publishing. They were, in my eyes, the most competent self-publishers). The *Hepcats/Cerebus* jam print was followed by the *Hepcats/Cerebus/A Distant Soil* jam print and then the *Hepcats/Cerebus/A Distant Soil/Bone/Starchild* jam print. Always with the (I thought) understanding that, to whatever extent the self-publishers involved thought I had helped them, that they would in turn help other self-publishers—because I knew I wasn't going to be doing conventions and trade shows much longer. I had answered the same dozen questions about self-publishing from wannabe self-publishers so many times that I had decided the best I could do was to put it all down on paper, collect it into one big comic-book format publication and from then on, just be able to say, "here" anytime anyone asked me anything about self-publishing ever again. Having made up my mind that my convention-going days were numbered, the only "toe" I still had in the "water" was the increasingly remote possibility of promoting comic books in—and to—the "real" world.

As comic-book theoreticians, Larry Marder and I had several times addressed the question of what you could do "live" in the comic-book field that would promote an individual comic book. Vaughn Bodé's "Cartoon Concert" – which I had seen at Cosmicon in 1975—where he acted out his various comic strips at the microphone in front of slides of individual panels projected onto a large screen over his head, to me, hadn't worked. Or, rather, it had "worked" to a degree. As a Bodé fan, it was interesting to say, "Wow, that's Vaughn Bodé up there." But there were no big laughs. As a viewer you were always jumping the "gap" between the projected slide and Bodé's performance, two different sets of timing throwing each other off. Jeff Smith, it turned out, was interested in the problem, too, drawing our attention to Winsor McCay's Vaudeville act, where McCay had "interacted" with his pioneer animated character, Gertie the Dinosaur and had done quick sketches. Likewise, Walt Kelly. At some point, we all decided to work on the problem together. "Beans, Bones, Hepcats and an Aardvark." Larry, Jeff, Martin and I faxing ideas back and forth on what could work. I was envisioning doing something in shopping malls. If you want to sell to civilians, go to where the civilians are. I wasn't sure it was possible to "do" comic books "live", or to do anything "live" that would promote comic books to people in the real world, but, to me, there was no point in just going to San Diego and having people say, "Yup, that's Larry and Jeff and Martin and Dave." Preaching to the choir. It also became obvious that I was sort of alone in that view and everyone else wanted to get something put together for 1996 or 1997 and do the big conventions. At that point, it seemed to me that we would—justifiably—be described as elitists. Larry, Jeff, Martin and Dave would imply the question, you know, *why* Larry, Jeff, Martin and Dave? Why not four other guys? I thought the way to defuse that was to set up basically-not-for-profit self-publishing events, one-day shows on the traditional comic-book flea market model that would demonstrate that we weren't trying to set ourselves up on some plateau, trying to pull some kind of Kings of Self-Publishing trip, that we still did shows with complete rookies, people with day jobs, mini-comics guys—shows where everyone gets the same table space for a minimal charge so we could help new self-publishers who were coming along (which, after all, was the idea that I had started with). And the big plus, to me, was that we could do it immediately. Renting meeting rooms in hotels is not brain surgery. While we did that (went my reasoning), we could start figuring out what we could do in the real world, which we could also do at the big conventions (since I was the only one who didn't want to do the big conventions I figured I had to concede the point, although I was pretty sure it was the wrong thing to do). I was also determined that we shouldn't go ahead until we figured we had a workable theory (i.e. theoretically, the average Joe or Jane Lunch-bucket, walking past this four-man module in a shop-

ping mall concourse, would have to say, "Whoa? What the hell is this? Jane. Hang on. Check this out.") Otherwise we would be wasting our time, in my view, on the largely meaningless "small fame" of comic books (as Gil Kane used to call it).

Well, ultimately, I decided to call the series of one-day self-publishing, small press events—which housed the Cerebus World Tour '95 (as did early versions of SPX and APE which started at the same time)— "Spirits of Independence". Jeff backed out of the Columbus, Ohio "Spirits" stop because of *Cerebus* 186. Ger and I staged each of the events with the help of a local self-publisher who did most of the leg-work while we paid the bills, and proved it was easily possible to do a comic-book flea market show just centered on self-publishing and the small press. Jeff didn't say anything publicly for or against them, which I appreciated. Just as—when he did his Trilogy Tour with Charles Vess and Linda Medley and the following year with Charles Vess, Linda Medley, Jill Thompson and a couple of other folks on what was obviously his template which had sprouted from the seeds of "Beans, Bones, Hepcats and an Aardvark"—I didn't say anything publicly for or against them, which (I had assumed—wrongly, as it turns out) he had appreciated. I know that he saw our events as indiscriminate—that having a show with a bunch of amateur mini-comics people who haven't a snowball's chance in hell of ever breaking even, let alone turning a profit, drags everyone else down. He knows that I saw his event as elitist—that is, with no answer to the question "*Why* Jeff and Charles and Linda? Why not three other guys?" it seems to me implicit that what you are saying is "Because we're extra-special." Well, you know, who besides you says so?

Several years later on, the Trilogy Tour model endures in "Independents Island" at the San Diego Comicon (where a select group of higher-profile self-publishers and small pressers pools its resources to occupy a block of expensive real estate at the most expensive comic-book convention in North America) which, judging by the expanding roster, is attempting to avert the charge of elitism by letting more and more individuals participate every year. Which diminishes the focus the Trilogy Tour had (Jeff! Linda! Charles!) and begins to swerve in the direction of an "alternative Artists' Alley". Which, to me, only exacerbates the elitism charge. "Why you twenty cartoonists? Why not these twenty cartoonists over here?" and "Who do I have to blow to get onto 'Independents Island'?" and "What's wrong with being in 'Artists' Alley' with us? We bathe. Most of us even use soap.'"

The "Spirits" model...sort of...endures at SPX and APE, although both are now entirely corporate and run by committee. Understandable in the latter, since it has been bought by the San Diego Comicon—which is bound to produce the same effect as putting AOL Time Warner in charge of your next Independent Film Festival. In the case of SPX, it seems to be part of the "all things to all people" "logic of the next step" which led to its eager capitulation to Jeff Smith's "cartooning is cartooning is cartooning" philosophy (merging with ICAF, a general interest cartooning festival, while also "headlining" people like Art Spiegelman, Frank Miller, Scott McCloud, Neil Gaiman and others). Frank Miller enthusing that "the Small Press is the future of comic books" struck me, even at the time, as being as seriously skewed as if Steven Spielberg had been invited to the Sundance Festival (why Spielberg of all people?) and had said the same thing about independent film-making. I certainly don't deny SPX and its organizers the right to expand in any direction that they see fit, and I'm certainly pleased that a show which is still primarily devoted to self-publishing has proven to be a workable concept. But I am a stickler about these things. I think that self-publishing is different from regular publishing and I think self-publishing loses something when it gets subsumed within larger comic-book contexts, just as I think comic books lose something when they are subsumed within the larger Pop Culture "cartooning is cartooning is cartooning" context. My concern isn't purity so much as self-preservation. It is, inescapably, the habit of big fish to eat littler fish. Jeff, I know, has always held the contrary view—which, I suspect, is part of the reason that he was welcomed by the comic-book environment with open arms. "Finally, a self-publisher who agrees with us!" That is, a self-publisher who sees no difference between a cartoonist who self-publishes, a cartoonist who works for a small press publisher, or a cartoonist who draws Batman for a living. Cartooning is cartooning is cartooning. A few years back, after the last of the "Spirits" stops I remember Batton Lash briefly toying with the idea of staging a "Spirits-model" show and suggesting going for an even more purist approach than I had: self-publishers only, no small press and alternative publishers. Of course that was way back in the brief and shining moment when such a show would have represented a single move to an adjacent square and not a quantum leap to an abandoned chessboard in a now-ancient land long, long ago and far, far away and mostly, mostly forgotten.

(Just to "run out" this particular tangent to its present extreme, I found it interesting how many commentators who have been devotees of the Jeff Smith "cartooning is cartooning is cartooning" school, people who have ardently sought to subsume comic books within the larger Pop Culture societal context—as diverse as Chuck Rozanski and Heidi Macdonald—were "turned off" by the degree to which comic books had been marginalized at this year's San Diego Comic Con International by the "Big Boys" of Corporate Pop Culture. I have always seen marginalization as an inevitable implication of being subsumed within larger contexts—self-publishing within the comic-book field, the comic-book field within Pop Culture—so it was gratifying to have my views validated umpty-ump years later. Not that I foresee anything changing, but it was, still gratifying—after all these years of being, myself, marginalized in the comic-book field for not genuflecting to the "cartooning is cartooning is cartooning," "Pop Culture Wannabe" school—to see the shoe on the other foot for a change.)

I have also gone back and forth any number of times on whether or not there is any good purpose to be served by comic-book conventions, particularly for people in the small press and self-publishing. Once you add up how much you've spent on transportation, hotel, meals, parking, lost time at your day-job, lost creativity time and sub-

tracted from that the few copies of your book that you sold, aren't you really better off just staying home and drawing and writing your next issue? I have found this to be a real "deal-breaker" of a viewpoint with those self-publishers who are devotees of Larry Marder's "Gathering of the Tribes" model. That is, the view that the comic-book field is made up of a large number of "tribal" groupings and like North America's First Nations, we are compelled to gather in a big...Pow-wow...once a year. My own view, which has evolved over time, is that Larry's "Gathering of the Tribes" is more aptly described as the "Gathering of the Unproductive" which allows those who produce virtually no work to still feel as if they are contributing something to comic-book history (even if it's just a lot of hot air in a hotel bar in San Diego). No chiefs. Just a lot of Indians who are hard-pressed to produce ten pages of useable work a year but who want to make sure they have a firm hand on the tiller if anyone accidentally starts steering the Comic-Book Ship of State in some direction or other. Fortunately for those of us who stay home and actually do our work, there exists absolutely no danger of the Comic-Book Ship of State being steered in any direction from a hotel bar or anywhere else (as is now confirmed, annually, for those of us actually doing our work when—breathlessly awaiting the current high-end "scuttlebutt" from this year's Comic Con di Tutti Comic Cons—we find that, much as we suspected would be the case, nothing happened. Apart from a lot of hot air being expended in hotel bars).

So, such was the state of my ambiguity when I got a letter from Bob Corby in 2000 inviting me to his first ever SPACE in Columbus, Ohio. The "Spirits" stops were over and done with. The "Trilogy Tours" had run their course, APE and SPX continued to drift in the direction of their respective larger contexts within which they eagerly sought to have themselves subsumed. Ordinarily, SPACE would've been perfect and exactly the sort of thing I would want to support, founded as it was on the "Spirits model". Rent a big room with a bunch of tables, keep the table costs and admissions low, keep it to one day, let anyone exhibit—mini-comics folks, small pressers, self-publishers.

But, come on, it was Columbus, Ohio.

Bob (I thought) give your head a shake. Who do you think you should go after for a headline guest? Jeff, having steered clear of commenting publicly on the "Spirits" stops and my having steered clear of commenting publicly on the "Trilogy Tour," the last thing I wanted to do with the comfortable level at which Jeff and I were able to completely ignore each other was to open a can of worms by walking into Jeff's backyard (to mix a metaphor). So much did I not want to "get into it," I just ignored Bob's letter.

Later that year, the *Comics Journal* interview with Jeff had come out wherein he had claimed that he had threatened to give me a fat lip. I wrestled with that one. Wrestled with just letting it go, knowing...knowing... that there was no way I was coming out ahead. Jeff Smith is the Beloved creator of *Bone*. Dave Sim is the Despised creator of *Cerebus* (I hasten to point out that I'm not complaining. Being universally despised in a feminist society is, to me, the surest sign that you're doing something right). Jeff Smith was also either the Paper Tiger creator of *Bone* or the (for all I knew) Pan-Ohio Collegiate Flyweight Boxing Champion creator of *Bone*. In the former case, if I got into the ring with him, I would become the Despised creator of *Cerebus* who Banged Up the Beloved Paper Tiger creator of *Bone*. In the latter case, I would become the Despised and Banged Up creator of *Cerebus*. Structurally, my choices were limited to lose, lose and/or lose.

It was while I was writing my suicide, suicide and/or suicide note, "Dear Jeff Smith" (*Cerebus* 264), that I heard from Bob Corby again, inviting me to SPACE II. This time, of course, I had no motivation to tip-toe around what might or might not be Jeff's sensitivities about his home turf. In fact, given that I was making the offer to come to Columbus to meet Jeff in the ring in any venue and under any circumstances of his choosing, the invitation had come at a good time. I still thought, however, that Bob should invite Jeff to be his headline guest and I phoned Bob to suggest it to him. It turned out that Bob had invited Jeff to be his headline guest the first year but there had been a scheduling conflict with the CBLDF Cruise. Jeff is Jeff. Say no more. It also turned out that Jeff had told Bob that he would send some guys over to Bob's show to at least man a Cartoon Books table even though Jeff and Vijaya wouldn't be there. This was the last that Bob heard from Cartoon Books. In one way, knowing Jeff's views of the "Spirits" model, this was no great surprise, but in another way—considering that SPACE was a completely local Pride of Columbus, Ohio small press event, it was a very great surprise. For me, it still is. I told Bob that I would be happy to be his headline guest. After I had finished "Dear Jeff Smith," I faxed Bob a copy and warned him that it would be coming out right around the time of his show and said it was fine by me if he wanted to rescind his invitation—Bob had to live in Columbus, after all, and I didn't want him to get "sucker-punched" (as it were) by having an unwelcome association with the Despised creator of *Cerebus* and Evil Author of "Dear Jeff Smith". Bob said at the time, as he has said since, that he hopes that Jeff and I can patch things up and he also said at the time, as he has said since, that he didn't think he owed Jeff anything. I think the former is unlikely and I find it very hard to disagree with the latter.

It was while I was trying to think of ways that I could help a Small Press show—given that *Cerebus* is hardly a Big Box Office Name in comic books—that I remembered that Gerhard (in another context) had mentioned that it was a shame that we couldn't come up with some way of honouring Gene Day, some sort of memorial or other. That was when I thought of having a kind of Festival Prize, named in Gene's honour which everyone attending SPACE would qualify for just for exhibiting at SPACE. Not a huge prize. $500 U.S., a plaque and a "Cerebus Preview"-style excerpt published in the back of the book.

See, I've always been ambivalent about awards as well. Are they a good idea or a bad idea? I used to think

they were a great idea, until I lost one. The second or third Kirby Award, back when they still had the Kirby Awards. Back when they still had Kirby, when it comes to that. Jack Kirby was on the dais and they announced the nominees for Best Black and White. And *Love & Rockets* won. And I felt horrible. I mean, there you are and everyone's looking at you and you have this giant LOSER sign nailed to your forehead. You don't get to shake hands with Jack Kirby. I spotted Mario in the crowd with the award and offered my congratulations. He asked me if I had seen Jaime or Gilbert anywhere. They hadn't made it to the ceremony. Which just made it worse somehow. And then there was 1993 when *Cerebus* was nominated for four or five awards and lost every one of them. I was there for that, too. It was always much worse in person. Growing up, I could never figure out how someone could be nominated for an award and not show up at the ceremony. I hadn't realized that it was like asking why a pig wouldn't jump at the potential chance to be the centre of attention at a pig roast. It was a great relief (quite honestly) when I stopped getting nominated.

Awards are structurally unsound. It really does come down to comparing apples and oranges. Last year, when I was the one who winnowed the stacks of candidates down to a Short List, I really realized that. It was my choice completely, all my own personal preferences. And it still wasn't fair. Each book had its strong points and its drawbacks—usually just as many of each. By the time I had gotten the selections down to a dozen or so, all distinctions had become completely illusory. Some of them were going to make the cut and some of them weren't. All that could be said at the end of the day was: Here. These seven.

And then Gerhard had to take the stack of seven books and decide which one was the apple and which six were oranges. Or which orange was the most "apple-like" or which apple was the least "orangeish".

And this year, that was what I had to do.

Awards are structurally unsound but, inescapably, they do mean something. I was pleased to get the Ed Aprill Award in '79 (even though that was just an arbitrary choice by Phil Seuling). I remember what a pleasant surprise it was to win the 1984 Kirby Award for Best Black & White comic. With a Jack Kirby autograph and everything. It made the long, hard hours that I had to put in at the board somehow a little easier to bear, something to warm a small corner of your mind on those days when you don't know what you're doing or how anyone anywhere could justify paying actual money for your work.

Awards shouldn't mean anything. The work itself should be the reward. Just the fact that—in a day and age when most people never complete anything—that someone did complete something, a mini-comic, a first issue, a graphic novel, should be, in itself, a cause for celebration and should be an enduring source of gratification. That I made this myself (we should—all—be able to say to ourselves, in a more perfect world) is sufficient.

So, quite apart from the fact that I am as thoroughly ambivalent about Small Press Expos as I am about comic book conventions of any kind, quite apart from the fact that I am thoroughly ambivalent about the merit or lack of merit in awards, in and of themselves, I still find myself participating in one of each. Participating in what I see as very much an extension of the debate that started between Larry Marder and myself, which came to include Martin and Jeff, which led to the groundwork for "Beans, Bones, Hepcats and an Aardvark," which led to the "Spirits" stops, which crossed paths early on with SPX and APE, which spun out in a completely different context into the "Trilogy Tours" and which, I am sure, will incarnate in dozens of different ways in the comic-book field as the years go by as everyone has his (or her) "kick at the cat" as to how you can do comic books "live". Imperfect as it is, I still prefer the "Spirits" model—not in spite of but because of its largely indiscriminate inclusiveness which allows entrée for even the most marginal, the most vilified, the most excluded, the least well-thought of, the most impoverished and the most unpopular would-be participants in the comic-book field. I warned Bob Corby when Ger and I instituted the Day Prize, that we planned to make SPACE the "home" of the Day Prize only until another Small Press Expo comes along and survives into its second year. Of course, when I told him that, it was with the mordant conviction that the courses adopted by APE and SPX are inevitable—that as SPACE gets bigger it will seek to subsume itself—and self-publishing—within another, larger context. But, maybe I was too pessimistic in thinking that. Maybe SPACE will buck the trend and stay a nice small show—a show where anyone and everyone in the small press, mini-comics and self-publishing is welcome, where we all get the same size table and the same chance to attract the attention of however many attendees choose to drop by and pay the few bucks' cover charge to come in. Anyone and everyone.

Even, you know, Jeff Smith. I know Bob is more than willing to give him a free table. And if I'm the problem, I'm more than happy to pretend Jeff isn't there. Even if he's set up right next to me.

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce this excerpt from the recipient of The 2003 Howard E. Day Memorial Award:

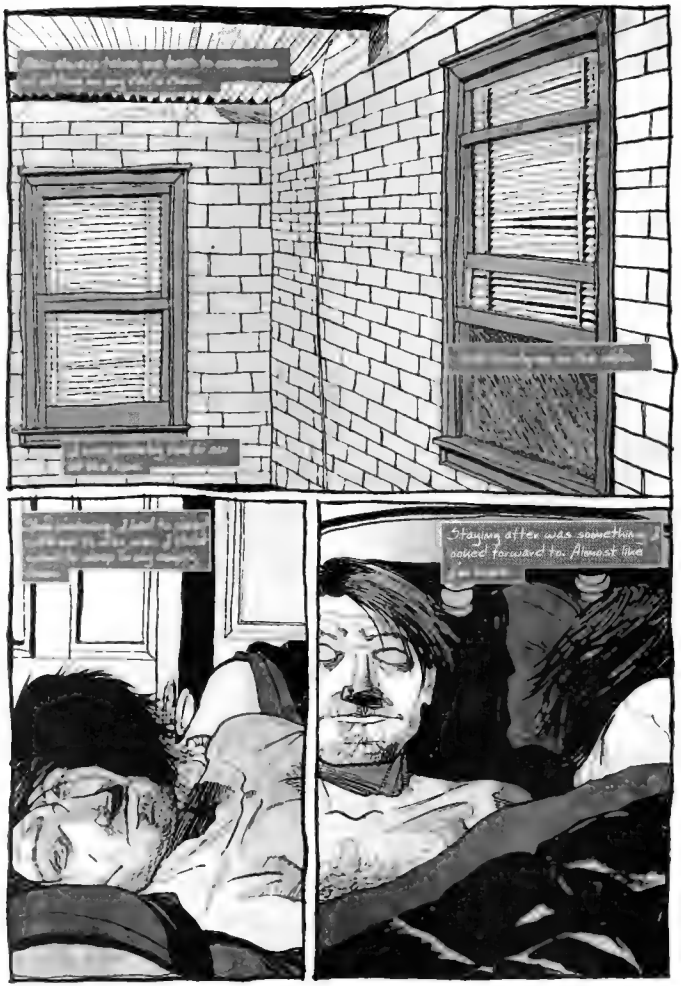
MISA by Tom Williams

Inkblot Farm Studio 730 Riverview Dr. Apt. #C7 Columbus, Ohio, 43202 opencrashcomics.com (four dollars and fifty cents)

For information on SPACE 2003 (April 5) contact Bob Corby at BACK PORCH COMICS
P.O. Box 20550, Columbus, Ohio, 43220 (*www. backporchcomics.com backporch@aol.com*)

SHADOW PRESS

The Day Prize recipient for 2002



INKBLOTFARMSSTUDIO

It seems odd home, but you know that?
It's been awhile since I've been here.
About a year, maybe?
I'll be two more before I stop thinking ... Hey, it's been. You know I'm exaggerating.
I drove past there accidental. Guess that framing shop moved, but Spikes is still there.
Her friend must have moved out. Must of been the smell.
I keep Through the head telling her it's went happen.

SHADOW PRESS

It seemed that girls would use me to pass the time
That was college.
HEY! WAIT UP!
The last one before I was actually approached was
Did I tell you about this?
I think he was more into...
Anyway, she never showed
It's okay.
The truly successful ones were sad little figments.
with the course load and all who had the time?

MISA by Tom Williams

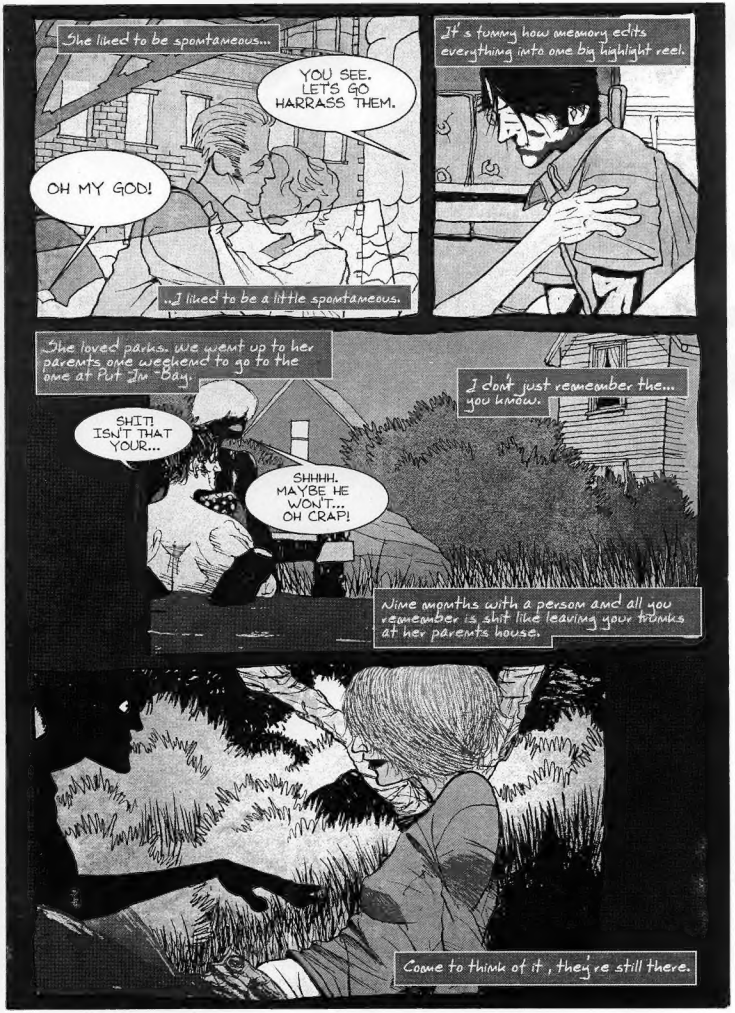
NEVER MENTION THE PAINTINGS.
HE WAS MARRIED WHEN I WAS SEEING HIM. HE KEEPS CALLING M

How do you read people? I can't even... wait, was that a headtilt?
SO YOU WANNA GO?
It's funny. I can't even tell if a person is mad or happy.
YA SURE, LETS GO.
That's bad for an artist isn't it?
Okay, so maybe Faster Pussycat, Kill! Kill! was a bad choice for a first date. She didn't seem to mind it.
YA BABY, YA!!
I think we were clicking. We had a lot of things in common. A love of camp and dirt. So on and so on.
The fat kid says it's all a set up.
MMM, GAWD...
But then...
HEY, I THINK SHE LIKES ME.
Did I mention that I used to be heavier? Nobody remembers that.

SHADOW PRESS

The Day Prize recipient for 2002

Alright, so I am not the poster child for self esteem. It's almost two months in the relationship. I've stopped counting.
...SO WE BOTH JUMPED IN THE POND.
HEE-HEE..
SHUT UP!!!
Look it, I am having fun. This never happened sophomore year or any year for that matter.
Not that I didn't have fun with you. It's different. Art school was so artificial. This was real.
...would I have been better off?
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!
WE'VE GOT SOME CLEANING LEFT TO DO CHUCK.
Maybe I would of been happier at a university. Wouldn't of gotten the same education but.
WELL, COME ON!
WHUH?
WE'VE GOT TO CLEAN THAT SOCK DRAWER.
NOW HURRY UP AND SHUT THE DOOR.


She liked to be spontaneous...
YOU SEE. LET'S GO HARRASS THEM.
OH MY GOD!
..I liked to be a little spontaneous.
It's funny how memory edits everything into one big highlight reel.
She loved parks. We went up to her parents one weekend to go to the one at Put In-Bay.
SHIT! ISN'T THAT YOUR...
SHHHH. MAYBE HE WON'T... OH CRAP!
I don't just remember the... you know.
Nine months with a person and all you remember is shit like leaving your trunks at her parents house.
Come to think of it, they're still there.

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